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THE INCARNATE ONE.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. CLAY, BREAD-STREET-HILL.

THE
INCARNATE ONE.

A POEM.

IN THREE BOOKS.

PART THE FIRST.



LONDON :
THOMAS WARD & CO.
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1838.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IF the structure of occasional sentences in the following Poem, or the description of an angelic conflict, should unfortunately awaken in the reader the recollection of our great Epic, it is hoped that he will regard the circumstance as a sufficient infelicity for the writer, without the aggravation of even suspecting him capable of the egregious folly of intentional imitation. Should the expectations of the writer be realized in the encouraging reception of the First Part of the Poem, it will be followed by the publication of the Second; till when, he considers it not an unreasonable request, that the reader would kindly suspend his judgment concerning the *plan* which connects and sustains the whole.



THE ARGUMENTS.

BOOK I.

ABOUT thirty years having elapsed since the advent of Christ, the blessed become solicitous concerning his continued concealment and future intentions on earth. Salathiel, one of the archangels, is permitted, in reward for peculiar fidelity, to look a moment into the book of the divine prescience. A company of saints and angels, elated with the expectation that the disclosures made to him will relate to the Messiah, propose to solace their impatience during the interval by recounting the particulars of his advent and of his subsequent history. Gabriel relates the signs in heaven which immediately preceded the Incarnation—the advent of Christ—and his own descent with a choir of angels to herald his birth to the shepherds.—The narration of one of the eastern magi succeeds.—Next, Simeon relates the coming of the infant Saviour to the temple.—And Joseph (the reputed father of Christ) describes the youth and manhood of Christ, with the remarkable disclosures made to himself when in the article of death.

BOOK II.

SALATHIEL, returning from the secret place of Deity, announces to them that the holy angels are to derive an important benefit from the advent of Christ—that his public ministry has commenced—and that he himself and a chosen band of angels are henceforth to wait on his earthly course. The soliloquy of Christ at the close of the Temptation. Salathiel and the attendant angels minister to him. He is proclaimed by John the Baptist—attends the marriage at Cana—cleanses the Temple—his journeyings—Samaria—Nazareth—Capernaum—effects of his teaching and miracles—his midnight devotion on Hermon—calling of his apostles—his discourse—raises the dead at the gate of Nain.

BOOK III.

THE Transfiguration—Moses and Elijah, as the representatives of the Jewish church, resign their trust and authority to Christ—the approbation of Deity accompanies it. The impious soliloquy of Satan, who has witnessed the scene—his determination to withstand Christ—availing himself of his power of demoniacal possession, he proposes to return with myriads of fallen angels to take possession of the inhabitants of Palestine generally, and to render the name of Christ hateful, by falsely imputing the whole to him. Our Lord, having explained this satanic plot to Salathiel, informs him, that, in answer to prayer, legions of holy angels are on their way to oppose the attempt, and commissions him to take the command. The armies meet—the fight described—the prayer of Christ crowns the arms of Salathiel with success.

THE INCARNATE ONE.

BOOK I.

B

5'

Their piercing gaze down, down, through countless
worlds,

To where this mote-like earth turns to the sun.

They sought it as the spot aye dear to him

They loved and worshipped, now his sole abode.

Much they admired the love that took him there,

And tried to fathom it, but tried in vain.

They trembled but to think that angels, once

Like them enthroned in light, natives of heaven,

Could try to thwart his purposes of grace :—

Compared whate'er of earthly prophecies

They knew, with all that angel-seers had sung :—

Reasoned, but humbly, on the grand results

'To issue from his sacrificial death—

Whether alone for Judah's sons he dies—

Or meant to expiate all human guilt :—

If human agency would be employed,

Alone, to consummate his mighty plans,

Or angel ministry combined with man's :—

Conjectured deeply what he might reveal

To man, of heaven, and gloomy hell ; how high

His hand would raise the veil of future things :—

Wondered that he so long his godhead veiled ;

And why so long delayed his mighty work.

'Time, which till then had flown too swift to count,

Oft would they now apportion and compute,
Longing to celebrate his glad return.

One beauteous morn, such morns as dawn in heaven,
Forth came there from their regal seats a band,
A radiant band, cherub with seraph joined,
Prime of creation's sons; elders, allowed
To sit nearest the' eternal throne, mingling,
From choice, with saints of earthly race, whose lips
Had not long quaffed the first fresh cup of bliss—
A constellation of the sons of light.
Joyous they came, as though the smile of God
Had newly fallen upon their thirsty souls.
Far down the depths of space their splendours fell
Like light first streaming from a new-made sun.
That hallowed morn, (so sings the muse from heaven,)
Salathiel, just returned from distant charge,
Where all his angel-attributes were tasked
And well-approved,—that morn repaid his zeal.
Forth from the secret place of Deity—
Where no created ray e'er tried to shine,
(For God is light,) which no created mind
E'er thought to image forth, whence issues all
Of life and goodness, purity, and truth
The universe contains,—came there a voice

Calling him reverently to approach
Where lies, o'ershadowed by the outstretched wings
Of cherubim, the mighty roll of fate,
And bend, a moment, o'er its prescient lines.

This well-known token of peculiar grace,
Whene'er conferred, swelled every heart with joy.
But now a sympathetic sense, (a power,
Surmised on earth, familiar to the blessed,)
Told them of vast disclosures to be made
Of him, their absent prince. Forthwith, each eye
Looked holy transport, and each voice essayed
To fill all heaven with praise. Flushed with this hope,
No sooner had they reached the favourite spot
Whence lies the prospect of this distant world,
Than how to' absorb the interval of time
Till they should realize this darling hope,
They quick resolved. What could beguile them more,
Than to recount the ever-welcome theme—
How he who reigned in heaven was born on earth?

“ Spirits elect, and saints redeemed from earth,”
Thus Gabriel spake, while silence might have seemed
His only auditor,—“ full thirty years,
Such as are measured out to yonder earth,

Have now elapsed, since He, whose name is graved
Deep on our harps, but deeper on our hearts,
Left that bright throne, in which, as in a point,
All glory meets—the very heaven of heaven,—
And went, O matchless grace! went to sojourn
With man—to wear his humble form—to breathe
His air—to taste his wasting wants—to be
Himself a suffering man. Ages ere earth
Had traced her mighty pathway through the skies,—
How much the coming hour rejoiced his heart
When man should rise beneath his plastic hand,
And be the lord of earth, as He of heaven;—
When sin had marred his goodly workmanship,
How promptly he engaged to heal the breach;—
And how, since then, his purpose has rolled on
Unthwarted by the tide of human guilt,—
All this I need not tell—ye know his grace.
At length drew near the moment when that grace,
Making a shadow of the brilliant past,
Was to burst forth in such unthought of forms,
That all who saw, forgot their power to praise.

“The hand of time had newly counted out
Another thousand years; and seemed to pause,
As waiting an event of mighty note

Now due, which would not, could not, be delayed.
More frequent now his heralds left his throne,
And quicker came,—o’ertaking in their flight
The morning ray hasting to greet the earth ;—
Unwonted radiance, deepening every hour,
Was seen collecting round him ; while the blaze
Softened beneath the most unpractised eye.
Those who had gone to scan his distant works
Came trooping from the farthest realms of being,—
Unlingering came, to find new wonders here.
Each newly welcomed saint told how, on earth,
The feverous pulse of expectation throbbed,
As if the parting sky revealed the approach
Of some descending guest. Heaven filled with signs.
Things which, till now, had stood unmarked and mute,
Grew vocal, and, in every listening ear,
Told loud and oft of some great crisis near.

“ ‘ Father, the hour is come ’—thus spake at length
The Uncreated Word—all heaven was rapt ;
And could a moment be when the’ ear of God
Hears nought below the skies, then it occurred.
‘ The hour of grace is come for rebel men.
Long have they trampled on thy righteous laws,
Effaced thine image from their inmost souls,

Aimed to exclude thee from thine own made world,
Fenced themselves in from mercy and from light,
And, in the' excess of sin, have calmly dared
To yield allegiance to the Foe of heaven.
Well might the arm which hurled him from his state
To bottomless perdition, fall on them.
But, from the first, I know thy thoughts to man
Have ever been of love, of richest love.
And what thy love hath purposed I will do.
They know not yet the fulness of thy grace ;
But I will leave thy bosom, and descend
With them to dwell ; that all, beholding me,
May see thy image visibly expressed.
Their life is forfeit, but I yield mine own :—
Well pleased to know that I shall thus achieve
The final conquest over impious hell,
Placate the' insulted majesty of truth,
And, rich in thy complacency, return
To reign the Saviour of a ruined world.
They are thy foes,—but I will give them power
To change their natures, to become thy sons,
And share with me the glories of thy throne.
The whole creation, cumbered with the curse
And tyranny of sin, groans in her pangs,
And labours to be free—I hear her groans—

But to her aid I see no helper come,
No intercessor pleads her suffering cause ;
Father, I go—thy faithfulness is pledged,
Thy records, both in heaven and earth, contain
The' unchanging oath, sworn by thyself supreme ;
And what thy will prescribes, I joy to do.
Already hath thy providence prepared
A human form, in which, invested, I
May walk the earth—Incarnate Deity.
No hand shall share with me the mighty task,
Assured that thou art with me, I depart,
Be this my highest praise,—Mighty to save.'

“ While thus the filial emanation spake,
What signs of grace paternal met your eyes,
Ye who the vision saw, or tried to see,
May well recall. Glory, in massive clouds,
Came rolling forth ; brightness on brightness heaped ;
Till, when he paused, all heaven was bathed in floods
Of living light. Each angel veiled his face ;
And, whelmed with awful joy, heard thus the voice
Of unveiled Deity paternal speak :—

“ ‘ Thou art my only, my essential, Son,
In whom my glory mirrored ever shone.

Before the first Intelligence of all
Who bend around my throne, had felt my power
To bless, or shown my purpose to create ;
From the beginning thou hast been with me,
The' uncaused participant of all I am.
And well hast thou thy Sonship now approved.
Man, though the next in guilt to those who marred
The bliss of heaven, making it transient hell—
Shall not like them be lost. Though all his race
Have wandered and rebelled, so **that** from heaven
I never looked to see if sin had left
Obedient one, and found him, no, not one.
Oft have they heard my voice in sundry ways,
By visions, holy seers, and tongues of heaven,
By earth and air, by water and by fire ;
All nature spread before them as a book,
In which are characterized, in living lines,
My power to punish, and my will to save.
But in these last days they shall hear my Son ;
My Spirit shall anoint thee to the work,
And all that see thy face shall mine behold.
Thy lips inspired shall sow the earth with truth ;
Each word a seed shall bear immortal fruit
That all who eat may live. Eternity,
Through thee, shall give her secrets up to time.

Thy heart shall be the dwelling-place of love,
Where all who shelter seek may find a home.
Thy life shall be a law unto the world—
The humblest copy shall secure my love.
Thy death—for I do give thee up to die—
Shall be my standing miracle of grace,
Which as a new thing I create for all,
Subduing human hearts, and blending earth
With heaven :—a principle, the universe
Shall feel ; a **theme**, eternity shall sing.
Hell will essay thee with his hottest fires,
And earth, unknowing thee, will lend her hate.
But in thy weakness they shall find thy strength.
Hell on thy head, perforce, shall place a crown ;
And, when thy name is named, shall, trembling, kneel.
Time shall submit its movements to thy will.
The scheme of universal providence
Is thine—rule as thou wilt. The earth is thine,—
Thy blood obtains it with a ten-fold price.
Men of all times and tribes shall call thee Lord ;
And thou shalt have a throne in all their hearts.
Thy name shall be their incense when they pray ;
And, when they praise, their last and loudest note
Shall be thy name. When they would see my face,
Thy righteousness shall be their only robe :

And every joy they taste thy hand shall give.
Thy kingdom shall outlast the burning sun ;
Thy subjects infinite—and each a king.
But at thy feet shall lie their several crowns,
Their gratitude not satisfied with less.
Go forth, eternal, well-beloved, Son—
Go forth to earth, while heaven looks wondering on ;
Earth can receive no more, nor I bestow.'

“ All heaven was lighted up ~~with~~ radiant joy.
The elders, rising from their thrones, bowed down,
And gladly laid their honours at his feet.
The first in might, and delegated power,
Leaders of armies, chiefs of every name,
Pressed in to be in homage first and chief.
The harpers with their harps ~~poured~~ forth a gush,
An ocean-tide of praise, such as, till then,
No saint from earth had heard ; nor angel ear
Since when the morning stars together sung
The birth-~~day~~ of the world. Fain would each ear
Have listened, but all hearts sought for relief
In praise. Each myriad-voiced rank took up
The whelming ocean-strain with lightning haste,
And raised it to a note, that smote, and made
Reverberate the everlasting hills.

“ Down from his throne the Filial Glory came,
No minstrelsy could stay his haste to save.
And as he earthward bent his godlike course—
Nor martial car received him, winged with fire ;
Nor panoply enclosed his regal form ;
Nor thunderbolts, impatient to escape,
Trembled within his grasp ;—as on that day
Which saw him, single-handed, issue forth,
Charged with the task of driving to their place
Those who **would fain** have made a hell of heaven.
But in his **mien** there sat a look that spoke
Of high-wrought projects labouring in his breast ;
Of yearning love, for objects steeped in woe ;
Of pity, listening to their far-off cry ;
Of brooding care—a fearful struggle near ;
Of high resolve **to** struggle to the death.
His air, by signs that could not be mistook,
Told of prospective triumphs—and of tides
Of new glory circling the throne of God ;
Of gems more brilliant to adorn the **crown**
Which mercy loves to wear ; and of a shout,
Already filling his prophetic ear—
A loud, unsparing, joyous, anthem-shout—
The incense of a world siezed in its fall,
Restored, beatified, around his throne,—

His grace the total cause. Who that surveyed,
But felt that unto him belonged, by right,
The homage, and the empire, of all worlds?
And that, should Hell pursue them as its prey,
His heart could shelter them, his arm could save?
Here had he, in the greatness of his love
Arrived, when, turning to the sons of God
That poured along his path—a tide of life,—
He thus in brief—

“ ‘ Immortal Dignities,
And Splendours of my throne deserted now,
Oft have ye ministered to guilty man,
And in your ministries have shown not less
Your love to him, than fealty to me.
I go to wash away his crimson guilt,
To disenthral his sin-imprisoned soul,
To make him glorious in the eyes of heaven,
To render him, as at the first designed,
A member of your happy brotherhood.
Till then, my presence visible belongs
To earth,—invisibly, I here remain.
Gabriel, thy service give with winged speed,
And, with thee, let attend a chosen quire,
Who, as they voyage through the listening spheres
And serenade the earth, make this their theme—

‘Glory to God supreme; goodwill to man;
On earth a lasting peace.’

“Around his form
He threw a fleecy cloud, and sped to earth.
We followed, much enamoured of our charge:
And with a shout, answered by those behind,
Proclaimed ourselves, in will, though not in power,
Saviours of ruined man. With eager gaze
The sun-pursuing planets watched our flight,
Borne by the magnet influence of love
More swift than they by that mysterious law,
(Love’s proper type,) which keeps them in their
spheres.

The’ imperial sun, bent on us, from his throne
O’ercanopied with flame, a look of joy,
To see a dawn more brilliant than his day.
Those fixed orbs—whose beams, though arrowy swift,
Are only yet in progress towards earth,
And shall but faintly mingle with the vast
Far-reaching blaze of earth’s renewing fires—
Pursued us with their looks of light and love,
And fain would they have shed upon our path
A single ray. The universal space
Through which we passed, glowed with an atmosphere
Of rival sympathy with human weal.

Our flight, though eager, did not reach its goal
Till Palestine, merged in the gloom of night,
Had sunk to rest. Beneath us lay the plains
Which oft had listened to the youthful harp
Of him, who soon had Israel for his flock,
And, for his song, words sent to him from heaven.
There as we, buoyant, paused, appeared a band
Of careful herdsmen, watching o'er their flocks.
These, in a guise which Fear might look upon
And be at ease, I hailed ; and in such words
Of kind and winning force, as heaven supplied,
Told them the mystery of Bethlehem.
Forthwith the' attendant Ardours stood revealed,
And sung with hearts, bursting with love and joy,
(As if to each alone the charge belonged,)
The' appointed strain—' Glory to God supreme,
Goodwill to man, on earth a heavenly peace.'
Entranced the shepherds lay, all eye, all ear,
Till, melting from their sight, we saw them gaze,
A moment, on the dark and vacant space,—
Then rising—with that treasure in their breast,
Hid from the ages past ; compared with which
The vaunted stores of earth's philosophy
Were meanly poor,—they hastened to the scene,
And were the first to bend before the shrine

Of Deity incarnate—(a sure sign,
To our divining eyes, that such will press
More eager in his train, than those they serve.)
Their hope thus lost in sight, their zeal took wing,
Nor flagged, till all Ephrata, wondering, rang.
Thus dawned upon the death-shade of the world
A light which, kindled, shall illumine earth,
And make it heaven.” He ended,—and his eye
Bespoke a mind lost in that future blaze.

The theme, too welcome to admit a pause,
Was quick sustained by one who merited
Peculiar audience. “Favourites of heaven,
Had any other name employed your tongue
Than his incarnate, I had held my peace.
But when ye speak of him—my Saviour king—
Though angels listen, I must dare be heard.
For I have seen his glory; and, while yet
His infant form lay in the arms of help,
Poured at his feet, (unworthy offering!)
Gold, frankincense, and myrrh. In quest of truth,
Long had I wandered in the ways of men;
For I was born, far from the land of God,
Where yonder sun ne’er rises but he sees
A thousand tribes prostrate before his fires.

There, first, the page of Zerdusht I devoured,
And lived to grieve at errors I had feared.
Nor I alone—two others with me joined,
In aim, and hope, and aspiration, one.
Together had we fled the sceptic school,
Where doubt sits umpire in perpetual mist ;
And, in extreme, before the Stagyrite
Had bowed, owning his despot sway. Had read
The glorious page of night on Belus' towers.
Thence plunged into the subterranean depths
Of excavated Egypt ; where, in love
With gloom, Idolatry hath burrowed deep,
Making her midnight double. Thence emerged,—
Awhile, the Portico detained our feet.
The pleasant-poisoned chalice, next, ascribed
To Epicurus, touched our fevered lips.
But all was vain, and worse—their very light
Was dark ; their wisdom, foolishness insane.
Ambition, lust, wealth, fame, idolatry,—
Each on its throne ; and, for its footstool, truth.

“ Disheartened, we returned, but not despaired.
This fact, at least, repaid our costly search,—
That one, inspired to teach, must come from heaven ;
Or man, lost in the laboured labyrinth

Himself hath made, would vainly toil to gain
Truth's path. Thus Plato prophesied, or taught,
When, groping after light, a ray from heaven
Refracted through Phœnicia, met his eye.
Tradition, too, had, from our Iran hills,
Vaguely conveyed from him, whom lucre lured
From Pethor's fane, to curse the host of God,—
(When the feigned oracle on which he rode,
Confounded him with human voice, and spake,
' That Jacob should behold a kindling star ;
And Israel give a sceptre to the world.'
But when to patient importunity
The Truth came forth, and bade us hope to see
That splendour dawn, not more impatiently
Do ye now scrutinize the haze of earth
Eager to see him cleave those clouds wherein
His midday glory hides, than we henceforth
To hail its rise. To ascertain that hour
We marked each current sign ;—tortured events
To make them speak ;—obtained the mystic roll
Of prophecy ; pondered each prescient line ;
Combined its numbers every various way ;
Prayed much, together, and apart ; nor less,
Because we found our efforts vain, and feared
That death might come, and rob us of our hope.

One night, when thoughtfulness and prayer had worn
The flesh to sleep—the mind still held awake—
A dream came o'er me:—I beheld a star
Down-gliding from the topmost height of heaven
Through utter darkness. As it nearer came,
On me it bent its bright and ardent gaze.
Awe-struck, and passive, I the gaze returned
With vacancy intense; till, reassured,
This charactery emblazoned met mine eye—
'The Star of Jacob rises, follow me.'
Forthwith, essaying to obey, I woke;
And, waking, felt, like lightning-flash, the truth
That 'twas a dream from heaven. With this possessed,
Early I hastened to divide my hopes
With those who shared my fears. They, as with minds
Prepared, listened attent: while Hope, fresh-plumed,
Hither and thither flew, that day; but where
To shape its flight knew not, and soon returned.
The sun had passed the portals of the west,
To dawn in other climes and give them day,
Leaving untenanted the cope of heaven.
Pleased with the homage, Night came forth to reign,
Kindling her ebon plains with thousand fires.
Our eyes, as wont, went with her through the skies,
Ranging the zodiac; and called by name

Each star as it arrived, like gathering friends
Welcome, and long acquaint. But soon we saw
One sight alone in heaven. The firmament
Of all besides seemed swept. A stranger star,
Forth issuing, as from an inner heaven,—
And with a speed which left the labouring sight
Bounding behind, and threatened to unsphere
The wheeling orbs,—rushed earthwards, till within
The measurable range of the first heaven.
There, like a living ruby dropped from the roof—
The jewelled palace roof of heaven—it hung,
Too pure to touch the earth. No oracle
Was needed to expound my vision now,—
We saw its archetype ! Another eve
Beheld it westward moved, a little space ;
Lingering, as, friendly, waiting our approach ;—
Like to that fiery shaft which led the way
When Israel, pilgrim-like, the desert trod,
And lured them to their heritage and rest.
Prepared, with willing feet we westward passed ;
And,—judge our joy, to see it, beckoning, move !
Each eve returning saw it at its post
Punctual, with angel faithfulness and zeal ;—
Till Fancy pictured it a golden lamp,
Borne by an angel hand invisible.

If, in its absence from the eye of day,
Our feet had erred, it came at eve, and, with
Such sweet attraction as the planets own,
Back drew us to itself. Thus led from heaven,
We hasted on,—through scenes whose novelty,
And unlocked treasuries of wonder, else
Had bribed our stay,—untempted, undetained.
The land of vision rose before our eyes—
The glory of all lands—and, in an hour
When, to relume for eve, our guiding light
Was absent from our path, (impatience-led,)
We urged our steps even through the hallowed gates
Of Salem blest. And, thinking it our goal,
Pursued our way through streets of palaces,
And busy paths of men, on to the throne
Of the great Herod in his purple state.
Already winged Fear, outspeeding us,
Had told our errand; and had straightway called
A priestly conclave to resolve its doubts.
This done,—impatiently, the tyrant told
That, to our question—‘where should Christ be
born?’
The voice of prophecy responded clear,
‘At Bethlehem.’ Joying to scent his prey,
And find it in his panting fangs thus soon,

He put the vizer of devotion on,
And bade us haste to seek the honoured spot,
And bless his ear with tidings of success,—
That he with regal circumstance might speed
To join our worship. Glad to find the torch
Of prophecy held up to cheer our gloom,
We sought the favoured town, near neighbouring.
Already could we trace its humble form,
Where 'mid the gathering gloom of eve it lay,
(Like the unheeded cloud in which, ofttimes,
The infant lightnings, and the essences
Of Nature's life, are cradled in repose)
Unknowing that it shrined the Element
Itself of life and all things ; and was watched
By the' holy Watchers, who for his dear sake,
Leaving their trust before the throne, had come
To' encamp around him, and to fill the post—
The honoured post, which man refused and slept.
Already had our thoughts winged on before
To' enjoy their high reward, forgetful that
We knew not where to follow—when, behold !
Our own bright star came to us, as at first,
And led us to the spot where Jesus lay.”

Here paused he a brief space, as if again

His eyes were feasting on that vision past.
“ No trace of human dignity was there ;
No tinselled servitors—nor thronging guests—
Nor censers breathing balm of Araby—
Nor naphtha cressets flaring 'gainst a roof
Whose fretted gold flung back the light in pride—
Nor fitful strains—nor yet untasted feast.
But otherwise ;—'twas like a spot, from which
Humility had swept, to the last trace,
The pomp of earth,—sacred to poverty.
There sat, of women, the elected, best,
Unconscious of all want ; say, rather, rich
Beyond utterance in her new-born wealth.
Uniting virgin, matron, heavenly grace,
Blent with the air, withal, of one who felt
That in her arms she clasped a mystery,
And an unearthly treasure ; and communed
With high and holy thoughts ; and tried to sound
The unknown depths of past and future scenes ;—
She looked a sainted one sent down from heaven
To take that precious trust from earthly arms.
That precious trust ! O how unlike it seemed,
To what it truly was. The casket gemmed,
May speak the wealth within. The searching glance,
May, through the many-folded clouds, descry

Where stands, behind, the palace of the sun.
But who that gazed, with sense of sight unpurged,
Upon that infant form, could, from aught seen,
Conjecture the Invisible within ?
Its tender frame, pillowed in helplessness,
Upon the lap of love. Its infant face,
The very map of innocence and peace.
So free, it looked, to be assailed by harm ;
So undisguised its infant attributes ;
So unpretending, that, to human sense,
It barely showed the promise of a man.
But unto us, by special grace, 'twas given
To see, beneath the human, the divine,—
The Son of God, hid in the Son of Man.
Like to a stream-fed tree, which never tires
To bend and gaze, for ages, on the face
Of the pure element which gives it life,
And shows it heaven ;—deep-rooted in our thoughts,
We overhung awhile that blessed sight
In adoration rapt ; until to faith,
(Before whose vision nought remains opaque,)
It showed more than the mockery of a heaven.
Then, prostrate, fell before him, and forth poured
Our costliest gifts—and, with them, gave our hearts,
Nor felt, till then, the penury of wealth.

“ Our first emotion past,—Memory awoke,
Reminding us of Herod’s last request.
But ere the morning came to guide us back,
A dream, bearing the signature of heaven,
Unveiled a horror which our purpose bent,—
The heart of Herod bared before us stood
Ripe, even to blackness, with a deed of blood
Not to be truly named.—Our path was plain :
Another route soon saw us far away ;
Balking his deadly aim, and journeying home.

“ Hard seemed it to be warned away thus quick
As from the Fount of Life, our thirst unslaked.
But never was Obedience laden more
With undeserved and unexpected gifts.
For, from that blessed time, the mystic star
Which erst illumed our path, seemed to have passed
Into our souls, replenishing with light
Of truth, and peace, and joy, each chamber there.
Henceforth, we lived and walked with God near
heaven.

And if aught evil cast a moment’s shade
Upon our hearts, we thought of Bethlehem,
And lived again. And now,—though launched forth
Upon an ocean-space of nobler life,

From which earth's memories, receding, fade
Like distant shores,—that hour which saw us tread
The Jewish court, (unconscious messengers,
Sent by high heaven to wake a sleeping land
To hail Messiah come,) which saw us fall
Where every knee shall bend, even at his feet,—
That hour still rises with a headland height,
Crowned with the light of an unsetting sun.”

The marks of wonder which his tale had stamped
On every countenance, gave sudden place
To signs of joy congratulant, unfeigned;
That he, favoured by God, had brought from earth
A recollection fit for angel harps—
Wealth for eternity—and, in his wealth,
All felt themselves enriched.

“ Who next will speak ?”

The thought was looked, not uttered ; for, forthwith,
The stream of narrative again flowed on.
“ Angels, and Spirits of the just made pure ;
If in the treasured store ye now collect
Of His dear history on earth, one mite
Unblamed may fall, be mine with joy to give.
Unlike to him whose tale of Bethlehem
Too soon hath ceased—my favoured lot was cast

Where God hath fixed his seat, and holds his court.
Even in the Temple's shadow was I born;
There lived, and seldom leaving it, there died.
Daily I crossed its holy threshold twice.
Due as the lamb was slain, and incense rose,
My humble offering came—a broken heart.
Nor was it spurned by Him who saves a tear,
And puts a sigh beside a seraph's song.
As Time conducted me from youth to age,
And Habit made devotion daily food,
The Temple gate became the gate of heaven.
The types threw off their filmy covering,
Disclosing future truths, slumbering, and laid
In their first elements of being. The rites,
Acted and dumb, spake with a prophet's tongue.
The veil became transparent, and I saw
Within—beyond—even to the dreadful seat
Where sat the Glory throned—nor feared to die!
The Temple 'itself became a prophecy.
Each time, I entered to absorb a ray
Shed from the Fount of Light. Once 'twas the
place
Of shadows—shadows cast before to announce
The sure approach of some substantial good;
And by their outlines well observed, what good

Prefigured :—I beheld them shorten, till
Faith saw that substance come, and all was light.
Then came into my soul a lofty wish : —
At first, it seemed a bubble on the stream
(Of thought ; such as will sometimes form and burst
By thousands in an hour. But like the stream,
(Seen by the captive seer,) that had its rise
Under the threshold of the holy place,
And which, self-multiplied in flowing, poured
An ever widening, ever deepening tide,—
It had an origin divine, and grew
Till it had worn a channel in my heart
In which all other thoughts were swallowed up.
Awhile, it lay within an unbreathed wish :
Familiar grown, I owned it to myself :
Then, faintly uttered it in prayer : then grew
Intent,—nor felt Heaven's silence a rebuke :
At length, it turned my every prayer to one,—
' That, ere I looked on death, mine eyes might see,
See, in his robe of flesh, the Christ of God.'
And was it urged in vain ? ' Thy prayer is heard '—
The all-gracious Spirit said,—'twas his own voice,—
And spake in words that echoed back mine own—
' Thou shalt not look on death till thou hast seen,
Seen, in his human form, the Christ of God.'

“ Years rolled away, and left me leaning still
On this sure staff; and looking to descry
Some rising sign upon the objectless
And unspecked verge of Hope’s horizon round.
The typic lights dispensed a steady beam
No more, but flickering grew, now like to things
Opaque, waiting to be reflected on;
Now kindling up as if they saw their sun;
Anon, they paled, as hiding in its light.
Age came, with all his family of ills,
And led me to the margin of the grave,
Leaving small work for death, whene’er he came.
Then came the treasured vision of my hopes.—
No tongue had told me of the shepherds’ tale,
Of pilgrim Magians, or stranger star.
But, in the place of gross and outward signs,
A sense, acutely apprehensive, woke
Within; which placed me in the anteroom
Of heaven’s great council-chamber; bringing forth
Signs imminent, lost on the outward sense,
And sounds of heavenly footsteps near.
The hand of God came on me suddenly,
And led me to the temple—blessed hour!
I entered to behold—surpassing sight!—
Creation’s First-born brought before the Lord

An infant of few days ; I saw Him there—
Our Israel's Hope—brought as an offering.
The Lord we sought, come, (as the dying tones,
Of prophecy had sung ; for even in death
His name was on her tongue,) come suddenly
To his own house, come as a humble guest.
A prophet's power possessed me, (what could else,—
The theme of prophecy within mine arms?)
I saw Him, pilgrim-like, on life's highway,
A weary, way-worn man, bearing a cross :
And every form of malice, earth and hell
Their shafts prepared to wound him as he passed.
I saw Him rise into the heavens—a sun ;
Nations sprang forth from night, stood in his beams,
And lived. I saw him close hell-gates, and throw
Wide open heaven even to its highest seats.
I'd only craved to see Salvation come—
I held Him to my heart : and read the map
Which showed the scope and picture of his life.
This was a consummation which did leave
But only one poor prayer for me to breathe,—
That nothing earthly more might cross mine eyes
Thus consecrate ; but that straightway to heaven
I might the unstained vision take, and gaze,
Without a mote of earth to come between.

Nor was it left my tongue to urge it twice.
But I do rob you of a strain more worth.
One stands amongst us—just immortal made—
Whom earthly ignorance reposes no less
Than great Messiah's sire : him let us hear."

Thus singled from the throng, the honoured saint
Nor waited to be urged, nor framed excuse
For silence, nor apology for speech,—
In earthly guise : but, with the suffrage due
Of every eye and ear attent, thus spake.—
" I might have rather asked—as one new come—
To hear ye speak of heaven ; or craved your aid
To raise my virgin song before the throne ;
When ye, instead, ask me to speak of earth ;—
But while we speak of Him our theme *is* heaven.
Even now, I hear his voice, I see his form.—
But not as late—death hath unsealed my sense,
And new-born apprehension guides my tongue.
Like him of Dothan (when the prophet prayed),
Who saw, what he had thought the vacant air,
Thronged with careering steeds and cars of flame ;
So I, now death hath waked me, looking back,
Do see the path I trod, erewhile, in sleep,
Peopled with sights, which make my blindness take

The crimson huc of guilt. What pearls of Truth
He scattered! which, if gathered up, might grace
The brightest brow in all this crowned host,—
And scattered daily in his common speech,
As though he held the key of all her wealth.
When aught bewildering in past events
Told in the holy books, engaged his tongue,
What apt solutions would he oft suggest,—
Like one who speaks less than he knows, or had
Himself been present in the questioned scene.
What time he spake of ancient deeds, in which
The thrice Adorable did hide his hand,
Drawing thick darkness round about his throne,
What easy vindication would he make
Of God's most untracked ways; unveiling views
Which showed them atom parts of some vast plan
Unmeasured yet by any human line;—
Making their reasons lie far on, where thought
No footing finds—their issues, still beyond.
The future seemed insphered within his eyes,
And often would he make it present seem,—
As though the seven-sealed roll of God's decrees
Were in his hand, and he did read from it.

“ Even now I gaze on all his earthly path ;

And to mine eyes it looks a radiant line,
As though a star should leave along the skies
Its glowing track. Since when his infant feet
First touched the earth, where'er his steps have passed,
Through pathless solitudes, and peopled towns ;
O'er poverty's bleak wastes ; o'er hills of toil ;
Through ranks of dangers ambushed, or displayed ;
Through thick-laid snares, sorted, and placed, by the'
hand

Of the great Foe himself who knew their powers,—
I see a golden and unswerving line
Which God's own finger might, on sinless ground,
Have traced for angel feet, even round his throne.

“ His infancy did form one miracle.
Ere he was born, his name was sent from heaven,
(Through one now near,) as God's own special choice.
When Egypt sheltered him from Herod's rage,
A vision sent him there ; when Herod died,
A vision brought him back. Like one who sleeps
Hard by an oracle that speaks in dreams,
I nightly learnt what conduct he must have
By day. Since when I found his high descent,
(Made known in condescension to my doubts,)
God, by most potent and most frequent signs,

Clearly bespoke him his great Care on earth—
The ark, the long-loved temple, now forgot.

“ His infant ripeness was an opening spring
When earth and heaven live in each other's smiles.
Each hour put forth a young green bud or flower,
Which, opening, fixed its timid eye on heaven.
His young untutored vision bent its way
Above,—as noting whence he came. His tongue,
Yet tripping inarticulate, lisped forth
The Holy Names as sounds familiar, dear,
Blent with his first imaginings. To God
Each sense incipient seemed self-consecrate.

“ His rising youth was as the most fair morn ;
Whoso beheld it, gazed, admired, and loved.
So wise, so ripe in knowledge, yet so young,
All marvelled ;—for to him the common ways
That lead to human lore were closed and barred,
Even to the outer gates. Nor did he need
To knock—God was his teacher ; and his book—
Whate'er he heard or saw. The hapless plant
Which in a dungeon's corner hath its root,
Pining in gloom, bends not instinctively
Towards the creviced light, nor yearns to taste

One warm sweet ray, more constantly than he,
Obscured by circumstance, inclined to catch
Each beam of truth which strayed within his scope.
Nature in him a close attendant found,
Close as her shade, through her most secret paths ;
And rather seemed to serve than be obeyed,
Watching his eye, and bringing to his feet
Her choicest gifts. Nor did his knowledge show
Like other men's ; whate'er its character,
Or various source, he touched it, and it wore
The golden hue of wisdom, looking fresh
From heaven, or thither tending by a law.
But, chief, the holy books engaged his thoughts ;
They were the manna which his soul did eat ;
The' appointed place of meeting 'twixt his soul
And heaven ; the spring at which his young soul drank,
And looked the unpassed desert of the world
Full in the face ; the' inviolable fane
Which, ever with a prayer upon his lips,
He passed within, exploring each recess,
Deciphering with care the symbolled walls ;—
Now scanning thoughtfully the' imposing rites ;
Now pressing near the altar, with an eye
Fixed on the flowing blood, until he pierced
The heart of its design,—then raised a look,

And poured a silent sacrifice of sighs,
More precious than the incense which it met,
And sooner entered heaven. Then would he stand
And strain his vision on the unpassed veil.
Anon, a prophet's harp, chanting high strains
Of Israel's future Hope, his steps allured ;
And, while each note would pass into his being,
Holding him tranced in thought, oft would he start
As if his own name floated in the air,
And signs of recognition met his eye.
And ever when he left it—like a priest
Fresh from a cloud of incense—he did breathe
Rich perfume, and, to all around, disclosed
In spiritual fragrantcy whence last he came.

“ How much a thirst for truth disposed his ways,
(His twelfth year scarcely passed,) one instance marks.
The great memorial feast of Passover,
To which from all their coasts the tribes go up,
Had, with his virgin mother and himself,
Led me to the Holy City as was wont.
(’Twas the first time he saw it knowingly.)
The’ occasion ended, and returning home,—
Knowing his social youth—we thought awhile
He mingled near us with the pilgrim band :

But, searching, grieved to prove him absent, lost.
Back hastening we regained the sacred walls :
Each place, we likely thought, remote or near,
We eager searched,—but two days searched in vain.
The third disclosed him—where—we much admired :—
Not in the place of concourse, pleased, confused ;
Nor lost 'mid novelties of sights and sounds ;
Nor ranging objectless the busy streets ;
But in the Temple courts ;—nor there, detained,
Smit with the firmament that glowed around—
The seven-flamed and ever burning lamp,
The molten sea, and high retiring dome,
The gorgeous dyes, the wreathed tapestries,
The costly gifts that live along the walls,—
Great scene of ravishment to youthful eyes,—
But in the hall the teaching rabbies use,
Sitting like Ignorance at Wisdom's feet ;
Draining their cup of knowledge at a draught.
His questions teaching more than their replies,
Unwittingly instructing more than taught,
Till all admired, but most they knew not which,
His modesty or depth—but all admired.
And when maternal love, more anxiously
Than wise, the reason of his stay now sought,
He sweet replied, like to a child at home,—

‘ Why sought ye me distressed ? should ye not know
‘ That I must be about my Father’s house ?’

“ But though a tree of knowledge he appeared,
The fruits he bore were of the tree of life,
Which, at occasion’s faintest breath, fell thick :—
Uncalled Obedience waiting on a look ;
And Thoughtfulness that seemed to weigh each breath
As it inhaled ; and Sensibility
Which heard the faintest tones of Nature’s voice,
And felt her silent, infant, first appeals ;
Prudence, which ever made its present self
Project into, and serve, the future being ;
And native Courtesy ; transparent Truth ;
And Love that clasped all lovely to its soul.
What wonder then that time, each day it passed,
Saw him more deeply rooted in men’s hearts,
More near to heaven—the favourite of both ?

“ His manhood shone, a morn without a cloud.
Heaven has its sun, and so, in him, had earth ;
And all who stood within his light rejoiced,
And blessed the Giver. Still, as in his youth,
With face and step direct toward the Truth
He onward pressed ; but now, like one absorbed,

Pondering to act, the goal at length in view.
Oft, in the midst of busiest act, he stood
Moveless, as thought him found ; till tears, perchance,
Or an unconscious sigh, showed signs of life :—
Then would he speak of sin—of man's dread foes—
And thickening cries of human misery—
In words, which showed that he had been far off
Ranging the ocean wastes of earthly woe,
Sounding its depths, communing with its storms,—
Nor would he spare of hints that hope was near,
And kindled into radiance at the thought.
Whate'er he said, 'twas Wisdom's voice that spake ;
Whate'er he did, his most indifferent acts
Were motives to the good, examples pure.
His very looks became as founts of grace,
Whence timid Virtue, in her need, drew strength ;
And never could she own the slightest wound
But he did feel the smart. What need of Law,
To those who saw his life ? Looking to him—
The Law stood silent by, and asked no more :
He was the holy Law impersonate,
Republished, and divested of its frowns.
Winning obedience by no force but love.
Nor could the search of envy's eye detect
One missing grace ; the moment which revealed

One heavenly principle contest the throne
Disclosed its opposite, in active power :
All had their place, and reigned their fittest time.
His was that rare perfection too in full,—
That high and heaven-wrought finish of the soul—
To stoop untrifling down to lesser things,
Nor overlook the least, yet hold its powers
Free for the' embrace of most momentous plans.
Goodness flowed from him daily in a stream,
Refreshing all ; yet who beheld him most,
Saw that a fount was held within his breast,
Reserved, untouched, ready to issue forth,
Some great occasion come, and glad the world.
Nor were his virtues like the sons' of men,
Grafted, and hardly borne. His nature brought,
And held in it, the seeds themselves of worth ;
As earth, yet wet with the first dew that fell,
Held in her bosom, sown by God's own hand,
Germs of an universal paradise ;—
And every seed in him became a fruit.
Goodness rejoiced as in its native soil,
Unstunted by the inclemencies of earth,
And brought forth, without art, luxuriantly ;
Making his life the garden of the Lord.
Might the first trial of man be made again—

One tried for all the race—and heaven the prize—
To him all eyes would turn, all hearts confide
The dread probation, and call heaven their own.

“ But I could speak of greater things than these,—
Things hid like stars till darkness calls them forth.
Disease had come, and led me to my couch,
Shutting me up in gloom, to count mine hours,
And think of life as of a by-gone day.
He came, unasked, into the vale of death,
And with me walked each step : he watched my wants :
He taught me to throw off the cumbrous load
With which earth heaps the soul, and walk at ease.
He knew my fears, half-formed, and bid them flee ;
Nor suffered busy hell to cross my path.
He trained mine eye to fix a heaven-ward gaze,
Till things unseen eclipsed the visible,
And earth seemed heaven. ’Twas there, in that
drear scene,
He cast his cloud off, and shone forth himself.
He told me whence he came, and what his name ;
And as he told, he looked fresh come from heaven.
He spake of a mysterious hour at hand,
Marked from eternity—and him the cause.
He gave my thoughts a tongue, or spake to them

As they had been his own. He raised a veil,
Which showed me future heaven ; revealing sights
Ye look not for, yet to be seen and sung.
And when arrived the last cold closing hour,
And life from every outward sense had gone,
The soul left free to go—most near he came,
As he would pass with me the gates of death ;
And, while a moment passed,—in Love's own tones,
Most spiritually accented to mine ear,
He thus detained me in the act to go,—
' Angels at hand await thee—thou art saved—
Thy guilt all cancelled, and thy last stain cleansed.
I wrote thy name above ere thou wast born :
I hold the keys of heaven ; my hand shall lead
Thy sainted spirit in to dwell with God.
I stay to work a Work—ascend, and prove all true.'"

THE INCARNATE ONE.

BOOK II.



THE ARGUMENT.

SALATHIEL, returning from the secret place of Deity, announces to them that the holy angels are to derive an important benefit from the advent of Christ—that his public ministry has commenced—and that he himself and a chosen band of angels are henceforth to wait on his earthly course. The soliloquy of Christ at the close of the Temptation. Salathiel and the attendant angels minister to him. He is proclaimed by John the Baptist—attends the marriage at Cana—cleanses the Temple—his journeyings—Samaria—Nazareth—Capernaum—effects of his teaching and miracles—his midnight devotion on Hermon—calling of his apostles—his discourse—raises the dead at the gate of Nain.



THE
INCARNATE ONE.

BOOK II.

STILL were the eager audience bound and mute,
As loth to think the last word had been spoke,
When, as the sun, whose coming on the dawn
In vain hath heralded, pours forth a tide
Of virgin light full on the waking eye,—
So, with approach unmarked, Salathiel burst
Full in their midst. A morn of loveliness
His face o'erspread: which showed him to have been,
Ev'n face to face, communing with the Light.
Each would have urged him instant to begin,
But feared, by speaking, to impede his tongue.
His soul thus overflowed,—

“ Angels, all hail !

And saints redeemed, all hail ! Divide the joy

Which I, o'erburdened, from the inmost shrine
And dwelling-place of God, have grace to bring.
Already hath the' Incarnate been proclaimed,
And thousands flocked to hear,—some, have believed.
The firmament hath opened o'er his head,
And through the clefted crystal, symbolized
In dove-like form, the Anointing Spirit passed
And crowned him with enwreathed light, (which he,
Henceforth will wear,—to heavenly eyes so known.)
Instant was heard the' Eternal Father's voice
Proclaiming him his Son, his well-beloved,
On whom his high complacency doth rest.
Already is he in the field—in fight.
Yes, hear it heaven! hear it ye sons of light!
He, in whose love ye live, hath found a foe.
He, from whose glance sin-withering, ye might think
The sons of darkness would in fright have fled,
Leaving him open passage through the world,
Hath, on the very threshold, found a foe,
Barring his path, disputing step by step.
Hell up in arms, hath (as the plot deemed best
In crowded council, after long debate,)
Sent forth her chief, armed at all points with wiles,
To stand between him and his opening aim,
And ply his human with infernal arts.

Long hath the conflict raged—not as in doubt ;
Ev'n now the Tempter, quailing, fears the worst,
His last shaft spent, and seeks resource in flight.
The' Illustrious Tempted with the contest faints.
What angel would not count his glory raised
To solace Him with grateful ministries ;
And henceforth with attendance, shadow-like,
Wait on his labouring steps ? Angels, applaud
His will whose law is grace,—that post is mine.
Consorted with a chosen band, I go
To do that little which a creature can
When the Incarnate faints ; to count his steps,
To watch his looks, to treasure up his sighs,
And fill an office until now unknown.
But let your wonder lose itself in joy—
In saving man, he makes your heaven secure :
Angels, ye know not yet your sum of bliss.”
He ceased : and to attend him all aspired.
But calling God's appointed to his side,
All fit equipment made, he sped to earth.

“ Father ! thy will is law, and I obey,
Not as my doom but choice, my highest bliss.
I know the path I tread is thronged with ills ;
I hear the gathering voices of a storm,

Mingled with fiend sounds of hate and scorn.
I see the Tempter, wiser by defeat,
Forging new weapons for a future hour.
In process, I behold a scourge, a spear,
A wreathed crown of thorns, a planted cross,—
And well I know their use. For, from my youth,
Oft have they frowned upon my daily path,
Oft made unquiet dreams ; till now they come
And go, leaving my lightest sleep unharmed.
And I have built my mind into a tower,
To stand all shocks the world and time may bring.
Let all the armed and banded powers of sin
Plant round their whole array,—my thoughts are
trained
To watch all wiles the longest night may bring.
My head is helmeted with hope ; my breast
With faith unpierceable is plated o'er ;
My only weapons,—patience to endure,
And love to vanquish hate. O earth ! earth ! earth !
Hear *thou* ! thy sons are deaf—thou know'st my voice ;
'Twas the first sound, save that of storms, thou heard'st.
I saw thee in thy chaos,—on that morn
I rolled thy darkness back and laid thee bare,—
Heaving and raging in thy lawless might,
Each breath a storm, each wave an ocean huge

Labouring without a pause to find a shore.
As with annihilation thou didst cope,
Seeking a centre nowhere to be found.
But even then, thou didst not shadow forth
What now, on every side, mine eyes behold.
Thou hadst no sin,—nor could thy treasury
Of dreadful things produce a type of sin.
Sin hath no type, nor can. But now I come,—
And lo ! thou art the home of sin—what less ?—
The chosen stage where dreadful Hell hath come
To make all dire experiments in sin ;
To prove its utmost powers, and work it out
In all the possible varieties
Of form it may assume. Sin is thy law :—
The only sympathy that holds thy parts,
Binding thee fast in one great work of guilt.
I look upon thy bosom—'tis all stained.
I list—but all thy natural harmonies
Are drowned ; and on mine ear there comes a tide,
A never-ebbing tide of grievous sounds
Of strife, and death, and many-voiced woe,
Mingling their kindred tones with those of hell.
I mark thy sons—scanning each heart I meet—
But this I find, in counting up their thoughts—
Hear it, O earth ! and be astonished, heaven !—

God is not there ! Father, I find not thee !
But thou all-knowing, and all-loving, God,
Hast sent thy Son, not to destroy, but save.
And thou art in me strong—and I will save ;
And I do wear their nature that I may.
O lost and ruined ! ye are my fellow-men ;
Ye know not, nor can know, my heart of love.
I know that ye will pierce it—but it holds
The hoarded love of an eternity ;
And ye the chosen heirs of all its wealth.
I know that ye will count me for a curse,
And dreg my wormwood cup, and cast me forth ;
But ye are perishing, and I can save,—
This be my only thought, this ever hath.
When now the Tempter brought the world in pomp,—
What thought but this possessed me ? what else could ?
Nought met mine eye, on all sides round, but death !
A wilderness of woe ! vast, crowded tracts
Of spiritual, immortal, essences,
Invaded, wasted, ruined, murdered, lost !
A captive world, chained to the Spoiler's wheels,
Moving along, pleased with the pomp, to death !
But I will be your Champion, I will stand
Full in his pathway, nor will know to move,
Till at my feet shall lie his iron rod—

The dart of death—your broken chains—and all
The heaped instruments and spoils of sin.
Death, I will be thy plagues! Sin, thou shalt die!
And ye, O ye, mine own, afflicted, loved!
If to endure all bruises of the world—
If tears of blood, wept out at every pore—
If the heart's life-blood, counted drop by drop—
If all that love can suffer—power can do—
Do, if required on the black floor of hell,
Where doing is suffering—if God can save—
Ye shall yet rise and reign with me in heaven."

Thus spake our own Redeemer as he lay,
Prostrate with fast and fight, on the bleak top
Of Horeb's height; whence he had beaten off
The Tempter-fiend; and mused in deep resolve
His great Adventure now begun. His words
Were meant for silence, or his Father's ear;
But Nature heard her name, and held her breath,
And drank in his, as at a second birth.
And angels dropping round, like dew at eve,
Bent o'er him, and their embassy forgot.
Silence awoke them with a soft rebuke,
And, instant, all were emulous to serve.
Each willing hand had brought him angels' food;

Fruits, which had ripened in the smile of God,
Exhaling life, culled with the eye of love ;
And manna, which had fallen that morn in heaven
Fresh on the dewy plains ; and living draughts,
Welled from the fount of God. Moved at the sight,—
This new expression of his Father's love—
He raised his eyes to heaven, and held awhile
Mysterious interchange of love divine :
The' attendant Ministry, with veiled face,
Stood round. This done, he ate, and rose refreshed;
And spake to them of heaven, and human things ;
And showed them all the mass of what he aimed.
They sang the heights and depths of sovereign Love ;
And, when they reached the' Eternal Father's name,
He led the song. Then, clad with zeal, went down
To make for man a path to happiness.

Meanwhile a Voice, deep as the dreadful note
Which Sinai uttered when the prophet quailed,
Came pealing from the desert. Jordan's banks,
And all her pleasant places heard it pass,
Peopling its path with echoes of alarm.
It reached Jerusalem—rang through her halls—
And, sweeping on, startled the distant shores.—
“ The time is come, His kingdom is at hand ;

Prepare a way for God, make straight his paths ;
Repent, repent, his kingdom is at hand."
The' astonished land went out—the conscience-smote—
The envious—the devout—the curious tribe,
Who find attraction in a shaken reed—
The' oppressed—and even the proud and priestly
race—

All thronged in crowds into the wilderness
To hear the Voice more near. What time they came,
He whom they heard proclaimed, passed by,—
A lowly, poor, and unattended man.
The herald Voice descried him, and exclaimed,
“ Behold the Lamb of God ! behold him there !
He who doth bear the world's whole guilt away ! ”
Two heard, as from the skies, and followed him.
And as he onward went his train increased,
Like a stream gathering tribute in its course :
An earnest of his power to win all hearts.
With these he passed to Cana, to a feast
Sacred to wedded love. Though he had come
To seek companionship with human woe,
And Sorrow sought to' engross him all her own,
He asked not the amenities of life
To pause the while, the world to wear a pall.
He went direct, as in a chosen path,

To smile upon this heaven-compacted tie,
This golden relic of primeval law,
And published it afresh, as God's own bond.
The feast was at its height, and Israel's God,
And Israel's Hope, (they knew him not,) are sung.
But why that pause of joy? He saw the cause,—
And chose that moment of their need to show
That power and kindness are the same with him,
That all the elements are his at will,
That he can turn our very wants to wealth:—
They bring him water, and, behold, 'tis wine!

The fount of miracles had long been sealed,
That he might burst more glorious on the world.
But, hold thy breath! his course is but begun;
This, but the first faint essay of his power.
His path shall be a march of miracles.
The deaf shall hear his voice—Hell quit its prey—
And wan Disease shall wear the blush of health.
The storm shall own his presence—and the dead
Shall rise as he doth pass, and follow him.
One of his common days shall crowd more signs
Than earth hath seen, the church hath ever sung.
For this is he of whom the prophets sang
“He beareth our infirmities away.”

Jerusalem next saw him as a Fire
Flaming around her holy temple walls,
And driving thence whole hordes of traffickers.
For they had turned the Passover to gain,
And bartered deep in blood of human souls,
Worshipping Mammon in his Father's house.
Unarmed, but with a simple scourge of cords,
And with the tones of injured Deity,
He rained upon their consciences such strokes
Of terrible dismay, that, rushing forth,
Glad to find refuge from his eye in flight,
They left him Lord and sole Possessor there.

Now hath he launched forth on his public life.
Farewell the solitudes of Nazareth !
The hours of contemplation, far from noise !
Farewell the peaceful days, the quiet nights,
The even ways, of what was once his home !
To all, farewell ! Far off the port he seeks—
And dread unsailed oceans roll between—
And thousand storms — and days all toil — and
 nights
All weariness—and human rage—and hell
Drawn out, and sworn, and centred to oppose.
But God is with him ; and his aim—how high !

The city through resounded with his fame,
And every hour beheld his mighty deeds;
And every tongue had its own wondrous tale,
Which Rumour magnified, and Hate decried;—
For now he bared his arm, and walked a God.
Some saw to purpose, and resigned their hearts.
But the proud hierarchy gnashed their teeth,—
For what had they to do with aught but gain?—
And he had laid his finger on its pulse.
Full well he knew the deadly schemes they aimed,
And left with them his name now first accursed.

Exiled by hate he journeyed to the south,
And sought the track the Baptist had prepared:
Taking the palmy way by Rachel's tomb,
He passed that fount of dew, the ancient well
Which David,—parched with the dust of battle,
When Israel fought Philistia,—longed to taste,
To Bethlehem; here 'twas he first drew breath,
And linked himself to poor humanity,
Rendering one spot on earth most consecrate—
Making its name a truth—a *house of bread*.
Thence on to Bethzor, Tekoa, and Ziph,
Where David sheltered from the spear of Saul.
He looked upon the lake Asphaltites,

Whose waters are the wrath of God distilled.
Fit flood for hell—so foul, so black, so dead—
Engendering in its unknown deeps, all cursed,
All shapeless things, types of those monster sins
Which made it what it is. Here lie engulfed,
Sunk to the centre down, too foul for sight,
Five towns—ulcers of the' earth—whose guilt might
blast

A world. He looked, and well recalled that morn
When he came down, (their sins had piled to heaven,)
And poured a vial which burnt them from the earth.
One tear of pity reached that baleful flood,
For unknown thoughts were labouring in his breast;
And on he hastened—for the world was lost—
Him heard the hollow cave of Machpelah,
Holding the treasured dust of patriarchs—
And gave forth signs of yielding up its trust;
But he restrained it till the destined hour.
Hill-seated Hebron, in his presence, held
More than its ancient royalty restored.
He trod the vale of Mamre, whose old oak
Shaded the pilgrim-tent of Abraham,
When, unawares, angels became his guests.
Thence on, through hallowed spots, and places dear,—
Dear both to God and man—where angels stood,

And He, their Lord, once spake to holy men,
And in the ear of piety still spake,—
By ancient wells, and altars hoar, and haunts
Sacred, where oft Devotion comes to kneel
And feel itself near heaven.

Where'er he went,
His path with ancient days was storied o'er ;
(Time's tablets not more full,) and oft he paused
To read to willing ears its holy lore,
Turning the dust he trod to wisdom's gold :
Through Eshtemoa ; and Lachish, Judah's curse :
And Bethshemesh, where once the' insulted ark,
Jealous for God, flashed death on eyes profane :
And Zorah, famed for him, the lord of strength,
Whose single arm o'ermatched Philistia's might.
And Ajalon, where stood the' obedient moon
Holding her steady lamp while Joshua fought.
And Ramathaim that rung with matrons' wail.
Where'er the great Baptizer sowed the seed,
He came, and reaped the fruit ; till Judah's towns,
And all her villages were gathered in.

Then 'twas, thy favoured time, Samaria, came ;
He sought thy borders, and became thy guest :—



Thus, first, proclaiming that his sovereign aim
Owned no restriction, but designed the world.
Crossing the plain of vision, where, in sleep,
The pilgrim Jacob saw the mystic path
Of busy intercourse 'twixt earth and heaven—
Resting on earth, a flight of crystal steps
Touched the high throne of God—crowded throughout
With speeding embassies of cherubim.
He came to Sychar—Jacob's well was there—
And sitting down, with fast and travel worn,
A stranger-daughter of Samaria came.
(But to his eye, a searching flame of fire,
Each heart he met resigned its secrets up.
What volumed loathsomeness he hourly scanned!)
He read the pages of her guilty life,
As though he sat upon the seat of doom,
More than her conscience true—but, as he read,
He wept, and washed each line of guilt away.
Roused by the wondrous tale, her townsmen came
And sought the' Illustrious Pilgrim for their guest;
And, in his presence, owned Messiah come.

His work here ended, as he issued north,
The Mount of Curses smoothed its brow, and smiled.
Hastening across the Plain of Esdrelom,

Where every rival nation under heaven
Hath seen its banners wet with Hermon dew,
And left its warriors' garments rolled in blood—
The struggle-scene where Empires have been
quenched—

The drenched earth, as he passed, disclosed her blood.
He led his chosen few through fertile vales
Where, once, the tents of Issachar rejoiced,—
And blessed again the towns of Galilee.

What synagogue not heard his prophet voice ?
And, if the mouth from the heart's fulness speak,
What grace exuberant his lips did pour !
Each Sabbath saw him break the living bread.
Now, taking off the veil from prophecy ;
Now, first, proclaiming truths new-drawn from heaven ;
Dispensing living draughts, fresh from the fount,
Which cheered, revived, and healed, each soul that
drank.

But, woe to Nazareth, thy doom is sealed !
Fair broke thy morning, but thy evening sky
Hath bolts of thunder forging in its clouds.
He read his office from the prophet's roll—
“ To heal all broken hearts—set free the slave—
And sound a jubilee for all oppressed,”—

But thou, pride-wounded, when he only probed,
Essayedst to cast him down thy mountain side.
He walked thy murderous ranks invisible ;
Passed he not off in silence ominous ?
More ominous his silence than his curse ;
Woe to thee, Nazareth, thy doom is sealed !

What town from east to west not saw his deeds ?
Where late he passed, his path might well be traced,
For there was Health trying its new-found powers ;
And Deafness, just unsealed, learning to hear ;
And unloosed Speech, shouting, for lack of words ;
And unsealed Vision, wondering, half afraid,
Like one alighted from a distant sphere ;
And new-limbed Lameness, bounding like a hart ;
And Penitence, nursing her infant bliss ;
And Thoughtfulness, and Sympathy, and Joy,
Clustering, to hear the tale of Gratitude,
Who, in her earnestness, would often use
The tones he spake in, and assume his ways.

And well his purposed path might be descried.
For, there, was Rumour, running on before ;
And Expectation, seated on the trees ;
And bland Congratulation, with her groups ;

And way-side Helplessness, in act to rise
And quit, for aye, its post of penury ;
And Filial Love, bringing its precious load ;
And couched Disease, with Friendship at its side ;
With lines of wretchedness of every hue.
He came, passed through their midst, and went his
way,—
The multitude looked round—Disease had fled.

Chief blazed Capernaum, his adopted town,
Whence streamed his healing beams the region round.
Her suppliant noble came ; he healed his son,
Sending his fiat to the distant couch.
Genneseret received him on her lake ;
From Simon's ship he taught the crowded shore ;
Then gave the word to launch into the deep,—
The ocean caves sent forth their finny shoals
Till the nets rent, the burdened bark near sank.
The wondering fishers owned the godlike deed,
And, leaving all, became his followers.

The Sabbath came—his labours made it Great.
At morn, a tide of early worshippers
Told where his steps would bend—nor could they err.
He rose upon them a rich manna cloud,

And rained salvation on their hungry souls.
But while the angel-food dropped from his lips—
What voice unblessed bids it, as poison, “ stop ?”
He saw the demon in its victim mask,
And, as he looked his will, it cowered and fled,
Uttering a yell which startled distant hell.
At morn, he called a fever from its prey,
And from its victim took the thanks of food.
The voice of evening called him to repose ;
But other voices plained in his ear,
And, for his day was short, he turned from rest.
His door was as the vestibule of woe
Through which the laden air brought taint and death ;
For, at its posts, as at the shrine of health,
Knelt wan Disease with all her family.
He stood among them—Pity armed with power ;
And, looking round, he tasted all their woes,
And felt a pang, which made them all his own,
And blessed the power which made them his—to save.
He spoke—’twas the first sound which some had heard.
Some saw his blessed form—their first dear sight.
Some called his name—the first word they had
breathed.
He spoke again—and wasted Atrophy,
And Dropsy swollen, and Palsy sinew-shrunk,

Upstood, and on their fair proportions gazed.
He stooped—and caught from some the last low plaint;
He rose—and they rose with him. Passing on,
Where'er his shadow fell, the dying lived.
Demoniac Frenzy rushed upon his path;
One word he spake—and Madness worshipped him.
And crimson Fever faded at his touch.
And where Disease had practised mystery,—
Arresting on their lips the first faint prayer,
He looked—the' unfinished prayer ended in song.
Thus did he toil, absorbing all their woes;
Nor turned his back till the last suppliant stood.

Blest day for thee, Capernaum!—but for him
What brought it but the empty breath of fame?
He ranged Decapolis—her borders rang.
Before, his name; behind, a multitude.
His daily toil outlived the' untiring sun,
Until his deeds engrossed all Wonder's tongues.
Day unto day proclaimed his prayerful nights,
And night to night disclosed his daily works.

Why gaze the clustered stars on Hermon's height?
Immensity around—why gaze they there?
On its high top, as farthest up from earth

Enshrined in darkness, and alone, there kneels
The world's Great Intercessor. Evening came,
And found him kneeling there ; the risen moon
Lingered awhile upon his upturned brow ;
Midnight passed over him, and still he kneels ;
Till all the air is incense and a prayer,
As he would save the world by prayer alone.
Close clasping the' eternal throne,—his voice,
Unheard below, was heard in heaven intent.

He rose—a beam, the first-born of the morn,
Sprang from the sun in homage to his feet.
The grey vale rolled her wreathed incense up,
And all the air was redolent with song.
That mountain seemed the altar of the earth,
Where Nature with her morning sacrifice
Had come to worship the great Worshipper.
Wet with the dews of night, adown the steep,
He laboured slow his solitary way ;
Holding before his eyes his mighty work,
And pressing it more closely to his heart ;
Till, near the plain arrived, he stood and gazed.
Far out before him lay a multitude
From Dalmanutha, and Decapolis,
From southern Idumea, and from Tyre,

From Sidon, and the northern coasts beyond,
Mixed with the sons of strangers from afar.
These from the paschal feast of Sion came.
There, late assembled, they had marked his course,—
Now, as the angel of Bethesda's pool ;
Now, as an altar where the lowly knelt ;
When with the needy—waited on by Power ;
Amidst the ignorant—the Light of life :
And when the mailed hosts of scorn raged round,
His looks gave law to fury, and made a lane
Through which as from a throne he walked in state,—
Dividing wonder with the Temple 'self.

Apart from these, more near the mountain-base,
His own disciples pressed and hailed his steps.
These were the first-fruits of his earthly toils ;
Men who had wondered at him till they loved,
Had left their homes, their hearths, their all,—
(Not the less dear to them because 'twas small ;
For, oft, the heart of Poverty bleeds more
To leave its cot, than Wealth to quit its halls,—)
And cast their lot with his for good or ill.
These, at his beck, went up with hungry speed,
Expecting, from his night's discourse with heaven,
Such morning manna as would feast their souls.

Ranged round his feet, he called on Peter's name,—
He of the sudden, quick, and fiery soul,
Which, like an arrow waiting on its string,
Was ever in his eye, or tongue, or deeds ;
Counting all zeal for service. While his aims,
Like giant shadows thrown before his steps,
Oft kindled hopes his after acts destroyed.
Till Pentecost beheld him Spirit-changed,
Challenging all who tilted at the cross ;
Calmly affronting death : and using, first,
The apostolic key of Christ's new church,
Let through its virgin gates three thousand souls.
Then, vision-taught, to Cæsarea went,
And first let in the Gentiles to the faith ;
Gave life at Joppa ; in Sharon's perfumed vale
Planted the rose that blooms immortally.
And when the Truth, in him, first felt a chain,
Salathiel, from the Lord of Truth sent down,
Forth led him free—to shew that Truth, freeborn,
Unchainable, shall walk the world at large.
Judea ranged, he burst its bounds, and sought
Euphrates' banks, dating from Babylon
The words of life ; where once his country's seers
The prophets of the Exile—looking through
A long-drawn vista filled with broken thrones,

Saw rise a kingdom for all time, all space.
That throne, now first from heaven set up, he preached.
Him, Rome, baptized but pagan, falsely claims,
Her martyr, patron, all :—his name, her charm
To work all lying wonders, and, with hands
Blood-smeared, to hold the prostrate world in fee.
His office, at heaven's gates to' admit her sons :—
More honoured than his Lord. Well might he weep,—
If tears had place in heaven,—to know his name
Linked to the grand imposture of the church,
Suffering fresh martyrdom from age to age.

Next, Andrew, the first follower Jesus had.
He, with his brother Peter, (now twice joined,
By nature and by grace,) had come from where
The Galilean lake drinks Jordan up,
Sea-shore Bethsaida. But, in after times,
(Such force hath grace,) leaving Gennesar's banks—
Where all the Seasons met and strove to reign—
Where Nature from her gardens, east, west, south,
Brought her best balms and fruits—the Sorek vine,
Sabea myrrh, balsams of Araby,
Apulian olives, with the sultry palm,
The golden-fruited citron's odorous shade,
Eschol pomegranates, cinnamon from Ind,

Lign-aloes, jasmins, and all trees of God,—
 Eden transplanted—making the' air a joy,
 A life-embalming essence ; and in bowers,
 Self-wove, of spicy shrubs, in sylvan glades,
 On orange-skirted streams, turned all the dust
 To amaranths and flowers ; in which the beams
 Culled from Hesperion sunsets, she inwreathed.
 Coasting that strand of beauty ever round,—
 That still, blue, lake, the mirror of her smiles :—
 He, with a scion from the tree of life,
 Passing the Euxine, north, to Scythian wilds,
 Crossed Nature's confines, and in the cold heart
 Of desolation planting, saw it bloom.
 The mountain tribes, Sacae, Massagetae,
 And all Imaus' heights, looked down, and saw
 That garden in their wastes ; and, like their snows
 In summer, melting, flowed to it. And e'en
 The Himmalaya in unknown Thibet,
 Higher than Alps or Andes, touching heaven,—
 Now worshipping the Lama—sought its fruit,
 And thus first heard of Immortality.

Then James, of ardent Galilean soul,
 Who, like the Tishbite, lightning armed, aspired
 To turn Samaria to a living coal.

He first of all the twelve went up to heaven,
Whom soon the Jewish Nero, Herod, slew;
Pampering his people's taste for christian blood.

The youngest and most loved disciple, next,
Whose head oft made the heart of love its couch;
And from that heart saw blood and water flow,
When in the crisis of the universe
The Sufferer cried, " Woman, behold thy son;
Behold thy mother, son "—his sole bequest:
Straightway the cross received the thunder-cloud,
And to the world gave back a cloudless day.
Him the seven churches knew, as God's last pen:
And Patmos, as her Exile—greater far
In being his home than as the time-worn throne
Of mightiest monarchy :—and all the church,
As her last Seer, to whom 'twas given to gaze
Up to the throne of God and all around,
Down to hell deeps, and on to time's last hour—
To hear the final blast—to see the dead
Standing for doom—and have the seven-sealed book
Resign the secrets of eternity.

Philip—his first-called follower—to him
Fell Upper Asia; but his race soon closed .

In Phrygian Hierapolis—far-famed
For worship of that monster-form of Jove
When in incestuous serpent-folds he held
Proserpine : the champion of the cross,
Stirred at the bleeding sight of myriads crushed
In such dire dragon coil, drew forth his sword
And rained upon its scaly sides such strokes
Of truth invincible, as brought the hosts
Of evil to its aid : then Philip fell.

He of the crystal soul, Nathanael,
(Oft called Bartholomew :) him, afterwards,
The Hither India knew ; his last remove,
Armenia, gave him a martyr's crown.

Matthew, of hateful but most gainful post,—
Lord of the passage o'er the Jewish sea—
Who, at a word, left all, and followed Christ,
Opening a higher commerce with the skies.
Parthia, the only land invincible
To Rome, to him surrendered, and confessed
How blunt her darts, most fatal in retreat,
Compared with truth-barbed arrows of the Lord.
Birth-weeping Thrace joyed o'er a second birth.
Next Ethiopia, taught by him, outstretched
Her tawny hands to God, clasping his throne.

But chief, to him belongs the honoured place
Of first evangile, opening to the church
The great canonic gate of gospel truth.

Thomas, whose faith not faultless, dared require
To search the risen Saviour's awful wounds,
Then fell in adoration at his feet,
And through the East proclaimed the Crucified—
Gave to the Mede a changeless law of life ;
To Persia, worshipping her sun-god, Baal,
A Light of which her deity's the shade ;
Turned the Hyrcanian bear to gentleness ;
Called off the plundering Bactrian, to seek
Heaven's pearl of price ; crossed India's bounds,
On the rich shore of isle Taprobane
Poured wealth unsearchable ; to Hindoo eyes,
Oft wondering at the necromancer's art,
Showed the first miracle ; and in the stead
Of feigned *avatars* of enormous lust,
Amazed the Brahmin with Incarnate Truth.

The Lesser James, of wondrous power in prayer,
Of whom his very murderers spake well ;
But Jewish malice could not bear his life,
And stoned him from the throne of grace to heaven.

Simon the Zealot, who in after times,
Told the Egyptian of a stream more sweet
Than sultry Nile ;—a day, when all their dead
Bursting their mummied cerements, and their tombs
Rock-hewn, the toil of ages, should emerge
To see the pyramids themselves depart,
(Walls from which Time had raised his hopeless
siege;)—

And of an art by which t' embalm the soul
By fragrant deeds for immortality.
Traversed the Libyan desert, where, enshrined
In an Oasis—(footprint of the Lord—
Or Nature's emerald set in a waste
Of sand)—the fane of Ammon once gave forth
False oracles, for gold, to flatter kings.
The plains of Catabathmos passed, which bound
Afric on Egypt's side, Cyrene's gates
Received his summons in the name of Christ ;
And Capsa's, where Jugurtha stored his wealth
From Roman rage, guarded by snaky wilds ;
And all the coast washed by the Maurian sea.
Thence, (they relate,) he crossed to Britain's shore ;
Here smote the Druid oak, and, in its stead
Planting the cross, himself was crucified.

Jude (not he of Carioth, name accursed,
Since whom no father gives it to his son ;
Meet synonyme of avarice, treachery, blood)—
Called also Thaddeus, and Lebbaeus ; he
Carried salvation first to Araby—
The incense-bearing region at his hands
Received a Name the perfume of all lands.
Royal Edessa gladly heard his voice,
Ruler and people bowing at the cross.

Opening His mouth, a cloud of goodness burst
And fell in copious benedictions round.
But not indifferently on all :—He blessed
The poor in soul, sin-robbed of all their wealth.
He blessed the meek whom storms have taught to bend ;
And they who hunger after angels' food.
He blessed the inly pure, whose souls are shrines
Where God and holy thoughts meet and commune.
The sons of peace he blessed ; the merciful,
Whose godlike attributes proclaim their birth.
And they that mourn, world-sick, and bruised at heart,
He blessed their bitter tears. And those he blessed
Whom Persecution makes her special mark
Because they have Truth's torch, and hold it up.
The family on which his blessings fell

Were the world's orphans all :—for whom she spreads
No table at her feasts, no couch for rest,
And for whose wounds she hath no healing balm.
These—the world's disinherited, of all
Save scorn, and what unworldly wealth they hold
Treasured most unsuspectedly within—
He welcomed to the palace of his heart,
And gave them gifts, and made them free of heaven,
Till on their heads his blessings shone like crowns,
And the world saw what kingdom he designed.

The holy code meant for all time and space—
Now long defaced, obscured, and overlaid
With the thick-gathered dust of Rabbin lore—
Forth-drawing, He, with the finger as of God,
Retraced, and forth republished with a power
Which Sinai's fires rekindled could not give.
He showed it as the elemental fire—
Not present only where 'tis grossly seen—
But all-pervading, with a lidless eye,
Which, weighing all the great world's thoughts and
ways,
Finds nought indifferent through all the scene,
Approving or condemning all it sees.
Opening the chambers of the heart, He showed it there

Searching for sin—its sword its torch—which flashed
On the blank face of conscience as it passed ;
Detecting sin before it dared the light—
Sin in its seed—the future hell enclosed ;
Rage in its spark, and lust in its first glance,
And murder ambushed in an unbreathed thought.

Pavilioned with its Father, face to face,
He taught Devotion prayer, as owned in heaven,
Unfeigned, untrumpeted, in which the tongue
Waits on the freighted heart to' unload its wealth,
And after all its toilings leaves it full.
He chose for it the name on which to call—
(For well he knew which best for human hearts,
And which most music hath in the' ear of Heaven—
From all the names of God he chose the one
Most human, most divine, most full of love.)
Then having filled its mouth with chosen words
He led it to a hushed and closed recess,
And left it at its " Father's " feet alone—
And Faith might see an angel guard the door.
Forgiveness in his lips became a law—
Breathing back love for hate, for evil good,
For curses blessings, and for malice prayer—
A law so broad the world's code holds it not.

And oft he left, and came to it again,
(As one by iteration aims to' impress
And would project a vital truth entire,)
Until at length he bound it on the soul
By the strong sanction of the prayer he taught,
"That as we others pity and forgive,
So God would measure out his grace to us"—
Making revenge crave judgment on itself.
He taught the hoarder where to stow his wealth—
A chosen place—fast by the throne of God.
He spake of those—he saw them in the crowd—
Who fain would see God and their Mammon sit
Co-regent on one throne, and worship both ;
He showed their separate thrones—'twas heaven and
hell.

And those whose means end with the present day—
Victims of want, who drain their wormwood twice—
To-day by dread, to-morrow when 'tis poured—
Their trembling hand oft making it o'erflow.
He bade them first seek heaven, and then, if need,
An angel-servitor should tend their steps.
Closing their eyes, wasted by watching long,
He laid them on the lap of Providence,
And bade them wake to find fresh manna fallen.
And those whom Guilt hath urged to Mercy's door,

And Fear holds back—he saw them lingering there,
And bade them knock and enter, ask and have—
Ask largely, and receive their Father's best.

While the broad way—broad as the mouth of hell—
Was glutted with a world of travellers ;
At the strait gate which heads the way to life—
(So strait that pride to pass must doff its state,
Lust from its harlots part, and worldliness
Throw down its gods of gold ; and each must shrink
Down to the small proportions of a child,
And bide the shock of hell aye posted there;)
He marked how few fought their hard passage through:
These cheered he on (as in the day of strife
Courage goads on her sons to plunge once more,
And with a spasm of high energy
Force through their way where death maintains his
stand) :

He bade them agonize and seize on heaven by storm.
Truths which the lapse of time had seen displaced,
As stars have wandered from their primal signs—
And truths long lost, as stars have disappeared,
He sphered anew; and in their train came more,
New to this darkling and night-loving world—
Making the firmament of truth complete.

But higher aim than teaching filled his eye.
He came to *be* the truth—to be himself
The very gospel of the death-doomed world.
Subordinate to this was all he taught,
And each mirac'lous act. Thus, his next deed,
When to the foot of Hermon he came down.
There met him as he entered pleasant Nain,
E'en at the gate, a bending, bruised reed—
A woman, following to the grave her son,
Her only child, and she a widowed one—
Poor broken heart, needing herself a bier.
“Stand still,” he said; for all his founts of grief
Were broken up. “Weep not;” and, from the bier,
Called down her son to wipe her tears away.
By which, as in a mirror, he would show
That he, self-moved, had from high heaven come down,
Descending all the way in miracle,
To meet this death-struck and pall-covered world,
Marching in sad procession to the grave,
To take that pall off, dry up all its tears,
And be its Resurrection and its Life.



THE INCARNATE ONE.

BOOK III.



THE ARGUMENT.

The Transfiguration—Moses and Elijah, as the representatives of the Jewish church, resign their trust and authority to Christ—the approbation of Deity accompanies it. The impious soliloquy of Satan, who has witnessed the scene—his determination to withstand Christ — availing himself of his power of demoniacal possession, he proposes to return with myriads of fallen angels to take possession of the inhabitants of Palestine generally, and to render the name of Christ hateful, by falsely imputing the whole to him. Our Lord, having explained this satanic plot to Salathiel, informs him, that, in answer to prayer, legions of holy angels are on their way to oppose the attempt, and commissions him to take the command. The armies meet—the fight described—the prayer of Christ crowns the arms of Salathiel with success.



THE
INCARNATE ONE.

BOOK III.

HEAVEN hourly visits all its earthly cares,
And in its loaded hand brings that they need ;—
From the dull weed fed with the precious dew,
Up to the soul ripe for a seraph's crown ;
On which the lowest benison it sheds
Are emanations from the throne of God.

What then shall He, the' Incarnate One, receive ;
Whose human soul, sublimed by what it shrines,
Answers to all the names that Goodness owns ?
What hath high Heaven in store befitting him,
Who, having reached midway his wondrous course,
Now, on the top of Tabor, for awhile,
Breathes—and looks upward from his toil to God ?

A chosen troop comes speeding out from God ;
A stately vision sails upon the air ;
A glory hangs o'er Tabor—it hath burst,
Discharging all its radiance on the mount,
And arching o'er his head a dome of light,
From whose awed roof bright happy faces look.
Meanwhile, a change came o'er him ;—he who late
Seemed part of the poor clod he pressed in prayer,
Now stood, beneath that sapphire canopy,
A vision bright—the Splendour of the scene !
Light centred in his face ; and from his robes,
Whiter than sun-lit snow, light dazzling streamed,
His human, swallowed up in his divine.
And who are they—two shining ones—that bend,
And look less glorious, but in robes of heaven ?
And why pavilioned with him face to face ?
One, Sinai knew, unscathed amidst her fires.
The other, hath his name with Carmel twined,
Where a god vailed to him, and lost a realm ;—
The Giver—and the Champion—of the Law.
What then could bring them from their blessed seats ?
In them, the Jewish Church impersonate
Comes to lay down her high and awful charge.
Into his hands they give the temple-key,
And, with it, sovereign power to speak her fate.

“ Hope of thine Israel ! Surety of the World !
Here ends the Trust thine ancient Church hath held,
For ages held, the Trust for human hope.
Long hath she spread her types, and poured her blood,
Feeding her altars from a thousand hills ;
Long toiled to keep thy children in her courts ;—
Set Jealousy to guard her precious things ;
And Faith upon her walls to wait and watch,
Hanging her signals out of news from heaven ;
And Wisdom at her gates, to call the crowd,
And in their ears to count thy promises.
But old things, with their purpose, pass away,—
Ev’n heaven itself advances in thy hands,
And nought is final which hath once begun.
Thy coming ends a system, which hath seen
Time in his youth, his manhood, and his wane—
Casting it back among the things that were.
Thy death, for thou—O that abyss ! that Thou
Shouldst die ! The Adorable, bleed on the cross !
The world’s One sacrifice ! the Last ! That scene—
The hour now waits—shall end that mystery,
Old as the primal sin—that eldest rite,
Which dyed the first-reared altar red,
And, like a vein that will not stop, still pours
The life-stream hot—the mystery of blood.

That hour shall see thee, faithful to thy Church,
Take from her hands blood-stained the ancient scroll,—
The burdened ritual which hath made her groan,—
And nail it to thy cross, a cancelled bond,
She, like a servant when his task is done,
Worn with the watching of a thousand years,
Shall in the shadow of thy cross lie down,
Pillowing her head against its awful base,
And, with the upturned eye of faith, expire.

“ But though thy dying is her death, thy rise
Shall leave her sleeping, and shall seal her tomb.
Thenceforth, all power, all office, meets in thee,—
Priest, prophet, king—thy greatness all absorbs ;
And what thy greatness takes, thy grace deserves.
What ails thee, Sinai ! that thou leavest thy place ?
God is not on thee now—his thunders sleep.
And, Sion ! thou, why bow thy regal head,
As thou wouldst shake the Temple from thy brow ?
A rival claims their homage, and they bend ;
Bend then—your hour is past—in homage bend
And kiss the honoured dust of Calvary.
Even now the Temple waits upon thy breath.
Enter—and all its wealth is at thy feet ;
And all its signs of power, like flocking doves,

Speed from their place, to settle on thine head.
Speak—and its priests are fled—its fires extinct—
The last wreath of its incense mounts to heaven—
Its glory, exile and lone within the veil,
Shall find its ancient throne upon thy brow—
Its angel-guards, descending from their seats,
Shall make its huge gates fast for evermore ;
And spread their wings, and haste to swell thy train,
Leaving it silent, tenantless, untrod,
The mighty grave of a departed church.”

Scarce had they laid their honours at his feet,
When came a hand, and placed them on his head.
Clouds of excelling glory bathed the mount ;
Paternal Deity was there, scarce hid ;
And from that central splendour came a voice,
“ Behold my Son ! World, henceforth hear ye him,
And him alone,—his word be law and life.”

This heard the favoured three, and only *heard* ;
They, as his future witnesses were there ;
And, at the first, supposed they trod the sky.
But when the Father’s awful glory came,
Threatening bright dissolution to all life
Less than immortal—they, o’ercharged with light,

Sought refuge for their mortal in the dust ;
And, while he spake, they only lived to hear.

In earth's blest gospels, this high scene doth stand
A blazoned page, unfellowed, and unique.
But they in heaven, in gospels writ for heaven,
In which his life is drawn as seen from thence,
Boast other Tabors, unimagined here :—
The typic scenes of bright futurities,
Anomalies of glory, wanting types ;—
Communings long, voiceless but visible,
In tents of light sent down, ending full oft
In transformations to which light is shade ;—
Visions, seen only from the side next heaven,
From earth eclipsed, in which Paternal Love
Seemed, as impatient of his stay, well-nigh
To bear him from the world, his work undone,
And back resume him where he was before.
While, of that escort band Salathiel led,
Which tenanted his shadow through the vale,
Each hath his golden chronicle besides ;
And, to the youth of heaven, who eager come,
Wooing the wonders of his favoured harp,
Recites, and lingers o'er, bright images
Of most unearthly things,—things, heard, unseen,—

Escapes of glory—secret embassies—
An ever-present atmosphere around
Which God had breathed into, and made instinct;
More solemn than the temple's, and more full
Of high revealings,—marvels meant for heaven—
To which no path of earthly thought doth lead.

Vanished the vision in the heights above :
And from the mount, the gate of heaven, came down,
Once more to tread the vale, the ' Acknowledged Son.
But though his veil of poverty, resumed,
Made his transfigured glory seem a dream,
Yet who, that marked him, saw not, and confessed,
He bared his arm as if for mightier deeds,
And walked, not less the man, but more the God ?

But what lone being lingers on the mount,—
Like a huge meteor mantled in a cloud ?
His stature speaks him not of mortal mould ;
His lustre angel-like ;—but what his mien ?
No foe strives with him that he battles so.
Yet, now, he breathes defiance ; wounds the air ;
Now, plants his foot as on a prostrate foe ;
Now, stamps as he would crush the mountain flat :
Anon, collected, towering in his pride,

His port proclaims that he would stand erect
Before God's throne?—The prince of darkness he.
His hate to good, which serves him for a sense
Whereby to track all happiness—his prey,
Brought him that morning to the mount of God,
Scenting high purposes towards and strange.
Long since had his capacious breast cast out
All lesser hates, and swept, and set itself apart
To hoard revenge against the' Incarnate One :
And, from each day that passed, fresh tribute took,
Collecting in itself large stores of hate.
Thus ill-prepared, taking his stand apart,
The hell he saw, beggared the hell he'd left.
The splendour scorched him more than penal flames.
Each beam of radiance fell for him—but fell
A shaft of lightning which transfixed him through.
And, as the scene transpired, his shuddering bulk,
And visage, labouring with contortions, told
The serpent agony had found his heart,
And twined it round in an envenomed robe.

“ Here ends my doubt. O spectacle abhorred !”
So spake the Fiend when his wrath found words.
“ O sight intolerable ! accursed hour !
And this is Heaven's own Champion ! and, forsooth,

My foe! Foe, thou art welcome, though a man.
Hath Heaven none worthier to espouse his cause?
No zealot angel 'mongst his servitors?
They still know how to serve; or, have I been
So worsted, and oft foiled, by this flesh race,
That this poor heaven-pampered 'Son of man'
Dares cross my path? No, 'tis in scorn!—in scorn?
O blistering, burning, choking thought—scorn me!
Antagonist! Jehovah! Thunderer!
I ask thee where thou sittest on thy throne,
And in the face of all thy trembling host,
Hast thou forgot the past?—the glorious past?
Is it not late for scorn? One-third of heaven
Is mine—all paradise—and most of earth.
Is it not late for scorn? but let it come!
God, I accept thy scorn, and his poor rage;
Arm it with power, with thunderbolts,—thou canst!
And I accept it still.
But this is not my wont. O this pent world
Dams in my vast and measureless revenge,
That it breaks bounds and runs to impious waste.
But I will learn—what doth yon Jordan do?
So let the torrent of my rage calm down
And settle, in a deep Dead Sea of hate.
Hate! thou shalt be my element, god, oracle;

And I will be thy one, sworn, serving priest.
And I will pray—deep imprecations, deep ;
And offer incense—slander's foulest breath ;
And feed thine altar-fires—coals red from hell ;
And thou shalt have one Victim,—lend thine ear—
Prepare to drink in gladness with his name—
Enlarge thy altar for a great revenge—
That Victim—tempting name—is God's own Lamb.
But how ? Hate ! Oracle ! thine aid at need.
Say, how may one, so bucklered, panoplied,
Angel-retinued, girdled round with fire,
Be best attempted ? Virtue—Life—and Power—
These are his brazen gates ; the only gates
A foe, assaulting this dread tower, may try.
The first, I know—ah, bitter retrospect !
That was nought ; that trial brought defeat.
But is it then impregnable ? he's man ;
Has human wants, and ways, like other men ;
Oft seeks companionship—hence Bethany ;
Can be enraged—witness the temple scene ;
(That way meek Moses fell at Meribah :)
Has friends and followers,—those useful snares ;
And all the monster tribe of appetites,—
These, in some happy hour, may be uncaged :
And all the notes and keys that Passion owns,—

Which, played on skilfully, may music make
To charm the ear of Hell. All this is hope.
But hope wants wooing, which my mood not brooks.
And what if wooed, and lost,—a new defeat!
Then, what was meant temptations, turn to crowns
Which he puts on : and the black clouds of hate,
Raised to' inwrap this sun in endless night,
Form a pavilion to enshrine his beams,
And paint his glories to the gazing world :—
While Hate and I are one, this shall not be.
Next, then, his mortal life—why force not that ?
That neighbours on impossibility.
That gate is in the wardership of heaven,—
Kept like the tree of life from lapsed man,
The centre of an ever-circling sword,
Brandished by Jealousy until it flamed.
And, till his soul be stained, e'en let him live.
My aim transcends his life, outlives his end.
Then what remains but power, his God-lent power ?
That power must know a limit, hath a bound.
Heaven would not lease omnipotence to man,
Grafting his own right arm on human flesh.
And if 'tis limited, it may be coped ;
And if conditional, may be abused.
What wants then but a plan ?—ha ! Oracle !

Ha! ready prompter! ever-fertile Hate!
'Tis not all fable; things do breed in fire!
I see, and seize it—show it once again!
Vision! well worth ten thousand fiercest pangs,
Possess, rage, revel, in my soul—I'm thine.
And, now, if man can suffer, heaven connive,
And the fierce Flames I lead be still themselves,—
A deed, not yet in name or precedent,
Nor all unworthy our old hard-earned fame,
Making the plot of Eden a mere trick,
Forthwith shall be essayed; which whoso hears, .
Shall deem worse than exaggeration's worst,—
A deed—the eternal monument and pride of hell."

Thus, having feasted his blasphemous thoughts,
Like one new born again from abject fear,
He glared aloft, below, and wide around,
As if he dared the world to look again;
Or fiercely scanned and measured with his eye
The' unconscious theatre for his revenge.
Then plunged into the bosom of the air,
And sped to seek fit engines for his wrath.

As from his rock the Alpine dweller looks,
And with a solemn but untroubled gaze,

Eyes the piled thunder stores on Jura's heights,—
So, from his lowly station on the plain,
This scene the' Incarnate viewed. Not for his eye
Was wonder—well he knew the Foe : nor fear—
The rock that shadowed him was God's own hand.
But on his brow sat majesty in thought.
Using far other sight than outward sense,
He heeded not the passion-storm of words,
But pierced the monster purpose in its den ;
Till all the depths of Satan stood revealed.
Then, calm as one who sees beyond the' event,
Beckoning Salathiel from his post hard by,
Where, with a guard of cherubim, he stood
Tracking the' Alien in his clouded flight,
He thus addressed :

“ Angels, and Sons of God,
And (not less praise,) the foes of him now fled ;
What ye have heard, and whom, ye well divine.
For all the crowded realms of penal woe,
Where Evil moulds her giant sons at will,
And only sin is power, own not but one
Thus capable of taxing patient Heaven.
So low the guise in which he sees me now,
So much transformed, by love, from that high state
In which his proud rebellion met rebuke,

He deems me human all ; nor, disabused,
(Such want of sympathy hath bad with good,)
Could he my mystery of love digest.
And, when that mystery shall reach deep hell
Compelling credence, age on age shall roll
Before its face becomes familiar there,
Or fails, when seen, to startle and confound.
How, in the greatness of his wrath, he toils
Your eyes beheld. Nor deem the monster plot
His hate brings forth not answers to his throes.
Among the means accursed by which he strives
To push his empire wide o'er human fear,
What deadlier than with men to' incorporate,
Engrossing, demonizing all their powers ?
Beyond temptation, he would seize by force,
And, entering in, live through them, all in all ;
Thought, to their brain ; fierce passion, to their heart ;
Law, to each sense ; and, to their organs, will ;
Till their identity and consciousness,
Bewildered, go ; and their defeatured face
Puts on the image of the Foe within.
Thus, as impatient of their coming doom,
He seeks to antedate the pains of woe,
Turning their bodies into living tombs
Where he doth dwell with, and torment them, now,

Hasting to bring his hell to them on earth.
Presuming on this power, him given, for ends
Yet in the hands of Wisdom, incomplete,
He now hath gone soon to return again,
Borrowing the wings of night, his vintage-time,
Attended, from the ample rendezvous
And seat of all his powers, in upper air,
By legioned hosts of servile ministers.
Not knowing hate from madness in his rage,
With these he will essay to make this land
A region of demoniacs ; entering all,—
Save such as best may serve his bent without,—
Coiling his serpents round their shrinking hearts
To sting their thoughts to phrenzy ; and their love,
Their household love, poisoning with bitter hate ;
Arming their mortal limbs with demon might,
Before which all restraints that fear could forge—
Chains, fetters, bars of steel—would be as tow,
And all things, not possessed, must fall or flee.
Urging them forth, like troops of famished wolves,
Unhoused, unresting, sleepless, unconfined,
To seek short respite, and to find it not,
In hollow tombs, ejecting the long dead,
In caves, and deserts bare ; with eyes, from which
The ravening beast, fear-struck, would pant and flee ;

And tongues, lost to all human speech, but prone
To mock earth's wildest sounds, and other sounds
Forbad, to which nought echoes in reply.
Their every sense strung up to see, hear, feel,
Beyond the pitch of human; to commune
With the unbodied habitants of air;
To do prodigious and revolting things,—
Eating strange flesh, and most unnatural food,
Their own humanity quite purged away;
To tempt the elements when wrathful most,
Seeking to catch the midnight lightning's shaft;
To act before the all-seeing eye of Heaven,
All frantic blasphemies in gestures dumb;
Then strive to do death's work upon themselves,
From dizzy heights, in deeps unplummetted,
And strive again, yet find they cannot die,—
Their unrelenting Foe not yet appeased.
O land! O suffering scene! which but to think
Would task man's fortitude beyond its strength.
The nations round would leave, and move far off
As from the mouth of hell; thy tale of dread
Would fill the ample chronicle of human woe.
And even he—the obdurate Fiend—might find
His own dark place to loathe him for the deed.

“ But what the scope of this most tragic plot?—
This wide conspiracy against man’s race—
My race—mine own adopted kindred flesh?
What the catastrophe—but my defeat;
And, through me, despite done to favouring Heaven?
On his hint acting, they would all proclaim
Me the prime Cause, and shun me as their curse;
Which, those left rational, accrediting,
Mine hour is come. Already, in his prescient hate,
He sees me thwarted, baited through the land,
Angered, disheartened, fleeing from my work;
My claims above dishonoured with rebuke,—
And gloats to think my name yoked with his own,
Sacred to hate, through all the tracks of time.
Thus would he wound fair Mercy through my side;
And, planting on my prostrate head his foot,
Mount up to scale the lofty plans of Heaven,
And throw down human hope. But though he rage,
And, in his rage, his fiery-winged will
Sweeps, at a flight, the unbounded universe,
A chain is o’er him, a sure-tempered chain,
And,—(ev’n so, Father, ’tis thy righteous will)—
The hand that holds it, mine. Then let him rage,—
Mine be the office to assign him bounds;
Your hands the means. Angels! whose deeds are but

The thoughts of God in motion,—the swift wings
On which Omnipotence goes forth to do ;—
Whose movements through the infinite of space,
True to the central all-projecting will,
Describe all lines of beauty, forms of truth,
And harmonies which teach the spheres their song,
Go—show this Prince of Discord where to stop ;
Lest, jarring the new chord 'tween heaven and
earth,

He turn to dissonance what should be song.
Already have I prayed the Father send
Twelve cohorts of the chivalry of heaven—
Flower of the chief, choicest of all the best—
These, on their way unlingering, ye will meet,
Under their ancient leaders, ripe for war.
Of these, Salathiel, with thy ranks combined,
Be thou the Chief ; such is thy meed, my will.
Lead them to lofty deeds ; enact again
The wonders of that day, when fierce revolt,
First lifting up its daring front in heaven,
Fled, and asked hell a shelter for their rout.
Let each one think his sword is Justice' own ;
And, when 'tis drawn, view me, with hands uplift,
Your powerful Intercessor at the throne ;
And deem ye hear the loud cries of the world,

In agony, call on your names for help.
Go forth, and on your wings bear victory."

Uprose the eager band as on his breath,
And on the plains of upper air emerged.
Here, scanning the expanse, Salathiel spied
What seemed a cometary disk, that trailed
Prodigious splendours, making for the earth.
But as it neared, to his experienced eye
The threatening vision showed heaven's martial pomp.
Mass beside mass appeared, and rank by rank,
With separate forms of godlike height in front.
Still as they swept adown the steep descent
The whole took shape ; banners arose, and waved
Their bright emblazonry on brighter helms.
Shields of the mighty shone like sunset snow.
And then came sounds heroic, waxing loud,
Creating ardour for high enterprise.
Arrived, they stood upon the convex air—
A fiery field, wider than angel ken.
These, with glad interchange of well-met friends,
Salathiel greeted, marshalled, and harangued.
Him, as their Chief, they hailed with loud acclaim.
And, as their ranks advanced to seek their foe,
Who saw them, saw a living rampart move,

Built, and compacted, like the walls of heaven ;
And fit to bear down in its onward course,
Whate'er obstruction dared to cross its path,
And make the circuit of the universe.

Northward, with thunderous step, their course
they held

Full many a league ; when on the' horizon's verge,
The semblance of a cloud, where no cloud was,
Rose, darkened, and diffused on either hand,—
As, when propelled by myriads in the rear,
An armed host, filed through a mountain gorge,
Pours o'er the ample plain. Still as they neared,
The Etna cloud spread forth its dusky wings,
Threatening vast space,—all Hell was there in swarm.
In numbers seemed they like no earthly host ;
More like the wind-worn and age-heated sands
By which earth's armies have been whelmed.
Such as in arid Libya met the powers
Of mad Cambyzes ; or Gedrosia's clouds,
Jealous as ocean, and as tempest-strong,
Which swept o'er Cyrus and Semiramis—
Leaving no trace where last their myriads breathed.
Or, like the locust tribes from Araby
The wondering Persian sees for whole days pass

In broad dense columns that engross the air,
Trooping to waste some province of the sun.
Such seemed the sultry legions which now thronged,
Obedient to the mandate of their chief,
To sack and waste man's hope ; more than enough
To crowd a legion in each wretched soul.
Possessed with rage, they had not dreamt such check
As now drew near : and, at the sudden sight,
Back on themselves recoiled with panic dread,
Throwing confusion 'self into a whirl.
But quick, uprearing high his mountain form,
Satan now stood the centre of the throng ;
And, with a look which dared outface the sun,
Frowned on the chaos, and his look gave law.
Then, for surprise was not for him, nor thought
With danger to compound, he spoke his will ;—
Straightway the countless crowds rallied, arrayed,
And took all shapes of war on mightiest scale—
Deep columns, crescents, squares, and lengthened lines ;
With chiefs of note, fit match for all but Fate :
Forming a power, at which the Anarch proud
Kindled the memory of his ancient wars ;
And, in his wide imagination, saw
Battles unfought, and conquests yet unwon,
And realms and thrones new ceded to his sword.

Earth, thou hast not been barren of great strifes,—
Strifes in which Michael might have won renown.
Not those brute conflicts in which horde met horde
To game in war—outrages on the kind ;
In which all lost was life, all won a name,
And the only gods that battled gods of stone—
Crimes deified, heroic but in verse.
But strifes in which the elements took part,
Stars in their courses fought, the sun stood still ;
Where—in the presence of the powers unseen
Who, with intensive gaze, thick gathered round,
Felt at each stroke, a wound,—so great the stake,—
Truth, strove with error, crying loud for help ;
Liberty, her oppressor held at bay ;
And right, stood up, and closed, and strove with wrong.
Junctures of eras, crises of the world,
(In which its fate, hair-balanced, trembling hung,
All things of feeling closed their eyes in fear,)
Whose issues rung through heaven, and shook hell-
gates.
Such Marathon, Thermopylæ, Platæa—
Surnames of Freedom—but, to despot power,
Great names of dread ;—where Asia, drunk with
power,
Mustering her many-nationed hosts of slaves,

The work of years—once and again essayed
To cast her iron chain o'er Europe's loins,
And drag her to the tomb of liberty.
But Freedom rising, in her youthful might,
Sprang from her throne Ionian, with a band
Small but selected, and went forth, and fought,
Drove back the' embattled mass, and saved the world.
Who has not seen the sword-flash of that strife?—
It lightened o'er the nations as she smote ;
And all her eagle offspring since that day
Have with it fed their eyes as at the sun.
Such the red fields of pagan Rome sunset :
Where old Idolatry scared from her feast—
Her ten times lighted fires, with christian blood ;
Ten times put out—thought to hew down the cross ;
But her hacked sword fell from her palsied hand.
And, as the victim Faith, late bleeding, bound,
And prostrate at her altar's foot, sprang up,
Seized all her shrines, put on her purple state,
And on her seven-pillared throne baptized,
Sat down—lo ! how she plies her mighty wings,
With all her fabled train, in tardy flight,—
Jove from the Capitol, his thunders spent ;
Gods of the greater and the lesser lands,
Dishevelled goddesses, and demigods,

Lars, Lemures, oracles with loud lament,
Fates, Naiads, Nymphs, the whole Pantheon herd,—
The gorgeous vision of a thousand years
Sailed through the air, and faded from the west.
Such, on the banks of Loire, the field of Tours;
Or, later, at the foot of Calembourg,
Where the pale Crescent, which already gleamed
From Indian confines to the Pyrenees,
Leading its fierce disciples of the sword,
Unfurled its magic green—the Prophet's wand—
And to a final contest dared the Cross.
That lost, all lost—a mosque the vatican—
All Christendom in chains, the Moslem chains
Of Fate. But God was there; and though his hosts
Fought more mayhap for country than for truth,
Yet did his own right hand their standard bear;
Their every stroke he ratified with power;
Their vantage ground, as if they fought from heaven.
Then first the Crescent, though its name remains,
Suffered eclipse and wane; and saw its tide
Of Saracenic waves, like the old flood
Shrinking to bounds, ebb to their eastern bed.
And, to be matched with these, nor less admired,
Britannia's ocean-field, when Papal Rome—
Maddened to see the nations would awake—

To find her death-drugged cup of sorceries fail—
To hear a watchword-shout from land to land,
Whose every echo brought her fabrics down—
Mouthed curses deep, summoned her harlot brood,
And, gathering up her chains, and torturing racks,
Filled all their hands, and cheered them on to blood.¹
True to the scarlet Vice, Spain's seven powers,
Italia's princes, Lusitania's strength,
Launched their Armada from Corunna's strand,
And on the' horizon hung, a thunder-cloud.
God of our fathers ! then thou didst arise,—
And placing o'er thine island-ark of truth
Thine own vast shield—arming thine eager waves—
Helming our navy with thine unseen hand—
Bidding our weakness do the work of might,—
Their proud decks felt thy passing step and sunk.
Then, calling through the deep, all things that swim
Came from the far-off seas with hungry speed—
Thou badst them to thy feast. And what returned?—
The leavings of thy wrath. Thine ark was saved.

Earth, thou hast been the theatre of strifes
Which Heaven commemorates : but greater they
Which for thee have been waged, to thee unknown.
Such that which now impended—where the foes,

Creation's eldest born, were such in power
As God might leave the spheres to, he withdrawn.
The least could drag a comet from its track,
And give new laws to all the wheeling orbs.
And the high cause depending on their swords—
Should man be stormed and in the demon merge,
(One golden link in being's chain destroyed)
And Mercy, hunted from the world, behold
Hell's banner planted on her vacant throne
Flouting heaven's face—her earthly client lost.

Mailed in the right, the armies of the Lord
Had, fearless, pressed up to the' embattled edge
Where stood, as on the pedestal of pride,
Satan, supreme in mischief, with his peers.
Deep silence multiplied hung o'er each host.
When, first, Salathiel from his van moved forth,
And in mid space, confronting, challenged loud :—
“ And is it thus, Apostate, we should meet—
We, who were meant to zone the universe,
Binding it all in one great globe of love ?
Art thou not he whose throne was nearest God's ;
So high, no creature walked the space between ?
And canst thou hope by falling to rise higher,
When now the humblest angel is thine head ?

Was not the radiance from the glory wont
Fall first upon thy light-transmitting crown ?
Why wilt thou plant thine intercepting form
To turn aside from man each beam from heaven,
Throwing thine awful shadow o'er his hopes ?
Thinkest thou to shine by making all else dark ?
Once, it was thine to lead the morning stars—
Thyself a sun—how hast thou lost thine orb !
And wilt thou never cease to wander thus,
Plunging from deep to deep, untired to fall ?
Think not, Archangel, that I speak from fear ;
Fear is for guilt, as those thou leadst can tell.
But pity seized me for thy blinded course—
Pity that would prevent, not fear to' oppose.
But higher claims than ruth must now have place.
Why hast thou conjured up this mighty rout,
Dragging them on through sloughs and sinks of guilt
To do the scavengery of thy foul hate ?
Dreamest thou to hide thy purpose in a cloud ?
Or, if transparent, that high Heaven would wink ?
But hear, proud Hierarch, thine aim is known—
Known by the' Incarnate One, whom thou not knowest—
The One ordained, in weakness of a man,
To drive thee constantly to narrower bounds
Till thou shalt reach the pit from whence thou comest,

And gladly plunge to' escape his viald wrath.
Meantime, haste not thy doom by added guilt :
In these I lead, behold the arm of God."

"Had words the power to vanquish, I were lost."
Thus spake the irrecoverable Foe,
Veiling his rage, at first, in bitter scorn.—
"For sure such potent armature of words,
So clad with pity, yet so armed with threats,
Ne'er burst upon my hapless head till now.
But can humility have left the skies ;
Or is it there confined—no grace elsewhere—
That thou shouldst brave me, thy superior, thus ?
Well hast thou heralded mine ancient claims—
What time I soared where ye could barely gaze,
And wore a crown on which ye dared not look.
And what if, urged by the uplifting law
Which makes all natures seek the infinite,
I aimed to work out all the properties,
And proved the utmost powers, my being owned,
Forcing the limits jealousy prescribed,
But reaped not all the good the aim deserved—
What have I lost?—the servitude of heaven :
What 'scaped ?—eternal doubt—for now I know :
What won ?—empire, dominion, glory, power—

A power which makes ye tremble ; and a throne
Which asks no leave, but in its own strength stands.
This world, upon whose firmamental plains
Ye dare to stand, by sufferance stand, is mine—
Mine by the right of conquest, homage, time.
And, by the law by which your God and ye
Seek to transform all things to what ye are,
I go to stamp mine image on its breast
Despite all foes, incarnate, or from heaven.
Here I reign god—my way lies through your host.”

Thus boasting, thus blaspheming, from his eyes
Red seeds of fire 'gan flash, and on his brow
A thunder-cloud of wrath showed tempest come.

“ On, Swords of God,” Salathiel cried, “ advance ;
Their guilt shall be their weakness, and our strength ;
Not to chastise it were revolt from God.
' God, and his Son Incarnate '—be the word :
In this all power is summed, by this we win.”

As though the sun's bright armory had flashed—
A continent of blades instinctive blazed.
As quick, the Foe cast back a lurid glare
From weapons bickering from the penal fires,

And banners burning to provoke the war.
All Sinai's clangour breathed defiance back.
Advancing with a shout the vanguards rushed—
The horrid space closed with an earthquake shock.
Wide, overhead, careering javelins arched,
Like fiery shafts shot from a comet's train,
Making a canopy like hell's own roof.
But what below? Fierce agonies of might :
No longer there the straight embattled edge—
Huge promontories of projecting wrath
Showed where along each line the chieftains stood.
While, opposite, wide, deep, retiring bays
Told where their sword, far-reaching, circling, swept.
As rolled the living tide, now here, now there,
Each army, to its utmost skirts, but seemed
One, vast, continuous being, whose every limb,
Of outline measureless, coiled, heaved, and locked,
And grappled with its foe. Long raged the strife,—
Old fields, on mightiest scale, again were fought—
Gods overthrown—strength, nursed for ages, foiled—
Whole squadrons felled, like forests tempest-
ploughed—
The campaign strewed thick with the wrecks of war,
Anon, far swept by whirlwinds of the sword—
Names, hid till then, burst forth in glory's van—

And names, the first fame knew, out-prodigied
All past. Still crisis seemed to stand aloof,
As fearful, by appearing, more to' embroil.
This Michael deep resenting, who that day
Girt with his cherubim, and, comrades new,—
Earth's warrior saints that with them mixed and vied
Achieving angel feats—had, on the left,—
Where Hell, posting its puissance and pride,
Weened first to hear the shout of triumph ring—
Battled volcanic Moloch, and him quelled ;
Now dared decisive things. To right and left
His powers first looked retreating, then condensed,
Forth came their myriads in a wedge-shaped mass,
His dreadful sword the edge. One point he paused,
Upgathering all his archangelic might ;
Then, while his lifted form o'erhung the foe,
Drove down into their adamantine front,
Which now first quailed, his deep wide-rifting blade.
Like as some ocean-river of the south
Which, having heard from far the' Atlantic roar,
And rolled a thousand leagues to seek its foe,
Conquers a channel, and, with rival might
Pours all its world of waters through the main,
Threatening to' unbed the sea,—so through that chasm
Hewn out and channelled by their leader's sword

In rushed the Swords of God, a whelming tide,
Their torrent path still widening as they flowed.
The multitudinous rout amazed, dismayed,
Recoiled in fugitive disorder ; mass
Trampling on eager mass, more emulous
In flight than erst in fight, fled with such fears
As left their victors distanced in pursuit.

Meanwhile, like glorious deeds elsewhere were done.
Salathiel, whose tall crest ubiquitous
Had shone, in prowess, as in place, the first,—
Marking where, labouring in its ample folds,
Rich blazoned o'er with heraldry of hell,
The great Satanic standard comet-like
Blazed blasphemy and hot reproach ; upheld
By strong Azazel's arm,—as at the first
When Hell proclaiming empire (such is pride !)
Assumed mock regal state in sight of heaven,—
Him, through a path sword-hewn, Salathiel reached ;
And with a stroke omnipotence might own,
Nought less resist, clove through his falchion's
guard,
Mailed shoulder, plated side ;—the' unhandèd prize
Slow reeling to the shock, like some tall tree
Housing the tempest on Libanus' height,

The victor angel grasped, and, waving, bore
In trophied triumph to his shouting van.

This Satan saw from far, nor longer sought
To multiply himself o'er all the field,
But hastening to retrieve such dire disgrace
Came flaming as though wrath now first found vent.
Who might abide his ire? his own drew back;
Even those erewhile exulting, shrunk. But three,
Lured by the glorious danger as it neared,—
Uriel, the sun's bright guardian chief; Abdiel,
Invincible in might as first in faith;
And Gabriel, angel of the presence,—these,
Fired at the' occasion, fronted full his path,
Each burning to engross the onset fierce.
That honour Gabriel won: the fearful storm
Bursting upon his huge and fortlike shield
Discharged such vollied thunder as made quake
The pillared firmament, and scoff defence.
A glance at heaven drew courage from its fount,
And gave his sword, turned to a lightning joy,
Up to the' impatient strife. At this the Foe,
Mastering himself, placed his great wrath in check;
And, as stroke followed stroke, his face itself
Was a whole battle-field, where, in its turn,

Each passion took the lead. Each stroke he dealt
Spoke of nought less than of destruction. Each,
Returned, would be, if dealt in meaner fight,
A victory. To find himself so matched
In sight of all his hosts, once more his rage
Broke bounds. For what can might, when with
twin-might

It copes, achieve? or skill, when it is spent
On armour lightning-proof, in which heaven's bolt
Itself would find no entrance, leave no scar?
One blow he aimed containing a whole war:
For this his blade, swept, circling, o'er his hosts,
And in its comet course rushed into flame,
Gathering up all their rage, hate, malice, power,—
Their hell, into one stroke, and that stroke—fate.—
He stood—Orion, menacing the spheres.
Opposed, stood Gabriel with unanxious brow,
And strength in his right arm residing—stood,
Fit buttress for God's throne—with sword uplift,
Ready alike to ward, or deal defeat.
When now, behold! while each host, breathless,
lived—

Intensely lived, each in its champion's sword,
A thunder-peal, the well-known sign in heaven
When God doth special audience give to prayer,—

Louder ten thousand times than wont, compelled
Attention. Even the Two made pause, though still
In act to strike, and from each other gazed.
“ The universe be hushed ”—the thunder said—
“ Let all things wait ; a mightier power prevails.”
All things were hushed ; when, instant, from the earth
Uprose a voice well-known, whose every tone
Had been incorporate with their earliest being :—
They looked, 'twas Christ in prayer.

Lone, on a mount,
He knelt ; his hands uplift and pressed ; his looks
Earnest as if he saw the face of God ;
His voice, as wrestling with an old decree,
Now argued, now implored ; his whole frame prayed ;
He looked the centre and high-priest of earth
Labouring to' engross the heart itself of God :—
And this his theme, “ Father, I pray for him ;
Let man escape ; let these through prayer prevail.
Thy glory is concerned, and human weal ;
Father, by all the past unutterable,
By all the coming mysteries of grace,
I pray—thine own Incarnate Son, adjures—
Let man escape, let these through prayer prevail.”
Then rising, but with eyes still fixed on heaven,
He pointed eastward to the Holy Place,

And seemed to them a sacrifice prepared,
Ascending up in its own flames to God.

Such purchase hath the might of prayer on God's
High throne, that it did seem drawn earthwards down.
Such power to paralyze the giant limbs,
And very heart of evil, that he who late
Threatened to blast an army with a look,
Now, dizzyed, reeled, his fight forgot; as if
A thunderous bolt from heaven him stunned, his
sense

Seemed swimming in an agony of pain.
Gabriel, recovering from the mighty charm,
New nerved, sent home his yet uplifted stroke,
Which, falling on an ill attempted guard,
Struck high the sword of Satan in the air.
O where was then that angel of the chain,
Which once the' apocalyptic seer saw bind
Apollyon at hell's mouth, and plunge him in,
Turning to penal durance his late sway,—
Where then were his strong arms, and linked fate,
To antedate his doom! But vain the wish.
He, with his powers, prayer-vanquished and disarmed,
Fled in such rushing rout as crowned disgrace.
His broken masses, like a storm-wrecked sky

Where continents of clouds encountering meet,
Or like the fragments of a world upbroke
And drifting sent through the' infinite of space—
Sped for their frontier back ; and thought it far.

THE END.



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